

# Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/October 1982



*The Called Church: A Unique Message and Mission*

# Letters

The June issue published a list of sources that had discussed Ellen White's literary borrowing through the years. Now the charge is that the list itself is evidence of a cover-up! We can't do anything right!

## Great cover-up?

Regarding "Has there been a great cover-up?" *MINISTRY*, June, 1982, p. 12: I would like an explanation of what the writer is trying to say. Is he saying there has been a cover-up? Is he saying, "Decide for yourself"? Or is he saying that there has not been a cover-up? None of the published records mentioning the fact that Mrs. White used other sources included the official (later general) church organ, the *Review and Herald*. Only two references are from SDA published sources. Fourteen of the references were from men who were either disfellowshipped from the church or had their credentials taken away. Thirteen of the references are from unpublished sources. Twenty-four of the references are from sources that were not made available to the church as a whole nor were they recommended reading for the church by its leaders.

To use unpublished and published material not representing the official voice of the church seems to show a lack of willingness by church administration to state openly that Mrs. White used materials found in other works. That weight of evidence could lead one to think there was a cover-up. What do you conclude from the evidence?—S.D.A. Pastor, California.

In publishing the list of Ellen G. White literary sources, we were hoping that the reader could discover for himself whether there has been evidence of a "great cover-up" or conspiracy to conceal vital information. A few additional words of commentary should help in one's analysis of the listing of twenty-six literary sources.

1. In each case, reference to literary borrowing has most often been initiated by someone critical of the inspiration and divine calling of Ellen White. Many of these critics have promoted their views far and wide among Adventists. Dudley M. Canright, for example, was almost more evangelistic in his zeal against the SDA Church than he was in bringing converts into the church in his earlier days. The views of other dissidents, early and modern, have had fairly wide dissemination in Adventist circles. How could one attach the label of cover-up to that which has already been publicly disseminated among Adventists just because it was not published first by the church?

2. Of the incidents of borrowing that were first mentioned or noted by those loyal to the

church and to Ellen White, the extent of borrowing was so inconsequential that it did not merit a public discussion. Of the twenty-six literary sources listed, eleven had no mention of specifics, and all eleven were first noted by loyal SDAs. There was no proof given that borrowing had indeed taken place; there were no parallel columns showing literary relationships. It appears that, with one possible exception, the other fifteen examples where parallel columns appeared were invariably published by dissident Adventists. It seems that the critics were digging up most of the parallelisms, while those loyal to the church generally had no new examples to offer. Then why should the latter warm up something that had already been scorched by the former? We would suggest that the withholding of information is not cover-up if at the time that information is deemed to be inconsequential.

3. Since the list of twenty-six sources known prior to 1976 shows only the first documented instance of borrowing, it does not give all the subsequent discussions on the subject.

The following is a partial list of the subsequent discussions by the church on the subject of literary borrowing: (a) W. C. White and D. E. Robinson, "Brief Statements Regarding the Writings of Ellen G. White," August, 1933; (b) W. C. White, "Addresses to Faculty and Students at the 1935 Advanced Bible School"; (c) F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics (1951)*, pp. 403-467; (d) Arthur L. White, *Adventist Review*, Aug. 2, 16, 1979.

We can conclude that the fact of borrowing was noted or discussed publicly over the years, but the extent of the borrowing has been largely unknown until recent times. How can the church be charged with covering up that which it deemed insignificant?—Editors.

## Book satisfies

I want to thank you for pointing out the book *The English Connection*, by Dr. Bryan W. Ball. Once I began reading it, I couldn't put it down. It ought to be required reading for every minister who is a part of God's remnant messengers today. A peace flooded my soul as I was taken back to the many sources of Puritan brothers who sought for and rediscovered precious Bible truths that had lain dormant for so many years. *The English Connection* went a long way in satisfying my mind and reassuring me that the truths we hold have been from old and our message is one of

recovery and restoration. It is a privilege to be a minister and to expound these long lost truths. I'm going to be sharing the studies in this book with the members of my congregation in a five- or six-week prayer meeting series.—J. Allen Fine, Morristown, New Jersey.

## Thoughts on the pastorate

Your encouraging article "What's Wrong With Being a Pastor?" (June, 1982) invited readers to send you "additional points" that would help enhance the position of the local pastor in the eyes of the church and congregation.

I have observed that a minister who comes to a church having completed at least five years of service in his former parish is thought to be potentially a "good" pastor. Somehow, and rightly so, I think, longevity equals effective ministry. I'm glad that the trend in this conference seems to be to allow the pastor to stay in his parish for a longer time than in the past. I get the feeling that small congregations hold the opinion that their pastor is merely passing through—either into retirement or on to bigger (and therefore better) things. The small church attitude seems to be that it does not warrant or deserve a pastor who will stay awhile. It has taken me almost two years to convince my people that I want to stay and serve them, that I don't consider "bigger" to be necessarily "better." Leaving a minister in his pastorate for at least five years, it seems to me, would certainly enhance the calling of the pastor, enable him to build relationships and mobilize his congregation for evangelism.—Mitchell L. Williams, Kerman, California.

I suspect the status of the pastor would improve if he were given greater participation in determining his own professional future. I have been in my present pastorate four years, which is at least one year longer than the average Adventist pastoral length. But according to many who have studied these situations, it is less than the time required for a pastor to function most productively. Evidence indicates that by remaining, I will become more successful, while moving means I will simply repeat an experience I have already had. If I had some assurance I could remain, it would encourage me to become a better, more

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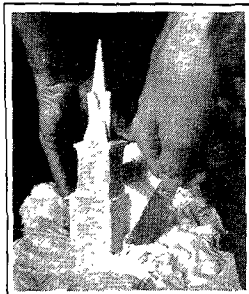
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# Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/October 1982/Volume 55/Number 10



COVER: SIEGFRIED E. BOHLMANN  
AND DAVID SHERWIN

**The Called Church: A Unique Message and Mission/4.** Jack Blanco. Problems formerly applicable to other churches have suddenly become our own. Our people are asking penetrating questions about the church, its message and mission. Why are we Seventh-day Adventists, and why should we be?

**Use the Bible Your People Use/7.** Charles C. Case.

**No More Guilt Boxes/8.** Arlys Walter. We are much better at getting the names of interested individuals than we are in effectively following up those names once we have obtained them. Here's a program one conference is using to get those names out of the "guilt boxes" and into a system of careful evaluation and follow-up.

**Who Reads Ellen White?/10.** Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr. A church growth study of 193 churches in North America revealed some very interesting information regarding the differences between those who read the writings of Ellen White regularly and those who seldom do.

**Adventism in Perspective/13.** D. A. Delafield.

**How a Hymnal Is Born/14.** It has been forty-one years since the current church hymnal came into being. Its successor is planned for 1985. Wayne Hooper, executive secretary of the hymnal committee, tells Editor J. R. Spangler what has been done to this point.

**Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind?/18.** W. B. Quigley. Great principles of the human mind have been designed by the Creator to make it possible for man to respond to His transforming grace.

**Reflections on the Reformation/22.** Sigve Tonstad. A young monk nailed ninety-five propositions to a church door in Wittenburg 465 years ago this month. Reviewing the movement that was sparked by those hammer blows may help to put a hammer in our hands today.

**Does Truth Change?/24.** J. R. Spangler.

**Science Has Its Limits!/26.** Lawrence E. Turner, Jr.

**Adventures in Ministry/28.** Teenie Finley. How does a pastor's wife juggle all the demands of home, family, and ministry—and make it an adventure?

**Evangelistic Supply Center/21. Shepherdess/28.**

**From the Editor/24.**

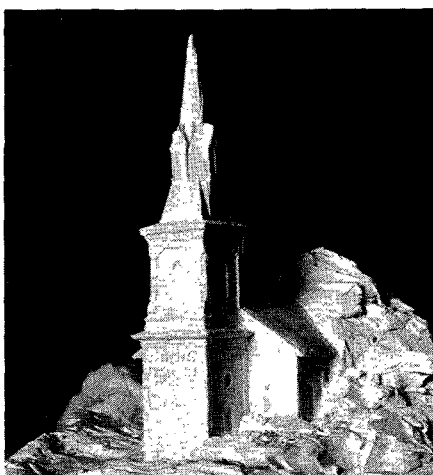
**Science and Religion/26.**

**Recommended Reading/30.**

**Shop Talk/32.**

*Do we have any basis for believing that God has called this church to fill a specific end-time role distinct from all other religious groups? Is such a belief presumption? This article, the first in a series that will deal with the nature and calling of the church, examines the validity of Seventh-day Adventism's self-perception.*

## A unique message and mission



**T**here comes a time in the history of any people when reevaluation of one's destiny becomes imperative. During such times men and women either forge new visions and advance, or become indifferent to their moral norms and perish (see Prov. 29:18). Our church finds itself precisely at such a point.

Eschatologically, time has continued longer than the church expected. Structures our forebears built have had to be replaced by more durable ones; social and organizational problems formerly applicable to other churches have suddenly become our own, and our people are asking penetrating questions about the church, its message, and mission.

Jack Blanco, Th. D., is pastor of the Palm Springs Seventh-day Adventist church, Palm Springs, California.

By what right can we claim to be the "true" church? Can we justify our claim by Scripture, or is our church a midnineteenth-century phenomenon?

Is our message made unique by the world geographical spread of our mission stations? Can we ignore the fact that other churches are also providing worldwide medical, educational, and spiritual assistance?

As to our mission, are we to function totally apart from other churches? Or are we part of the larger "body" of Christ? Have we imposed our apocalyptic interpretations on others unnecessarily? Do we convey the thought that people have to be Seventh-day Adventists to be saved?

These questions have no simple answers. However, they do prompt us to ask the more personal question: Why are we Seventh-day Adventists, and why should we be?

Seventh-day Adventists believe that their claim to be a called church with a unique message and mission is totally consistent with God's activity in Scripture and in history. They base their claim on the following Biblical evidence.

### Symbols of truth

It is God's prerogative to choose the means and method best suited to communicate His love to mankind. In the past He has done this by choosing representative symbols that would communicate His message and to which people could relate. In times of spiritual crises, such symbols became the visual means of reinforcing survival truth that we call "present" truth.

In the Old Testament, God instructed Noah to build the ark, not only as a means

of survival but as a visual aid to present truth. It attracted attention, stimulated conversation, increased awareness of what God was saying through Noah, and provided a tangible message-symbol.

In this instance the symbol was functional, a fact that soon became apparent when the animals entered and the door was shut. But the ark itself could save no one unless protected by God. The "body" of Christ, like the ark, cannot save, but does provide spiritual safety. "That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:39).\*

Later God chose a nation as a visible symbol of His truth. Through a prophet He gave them symbols of salvation and a sanctuary to which people of that time and culture could relate and understand.<sup>1</sup> He also gave them civil and religious laws by which they could function and become an effective corporate witness to His truth—particularly the truth about Himself.<sup>2</sup> It was never Christ's intention to set Israel aside and choose twelve fishermen to begin a new religion. But when the "church in the wilderness" became ineffective and its hermeneutic inflexible, Christ had to select new symbols for old truth,<sup>3</sup> showing that the responsibility for communicating truth can be transferred from one people to another.

At its inception, Christianity was considered a cult with uneducated fishermen in charge and sellers of purple expounding theology to dinner guests. And Christians who were educated, like Paul, made a nuisance of themselves by publicly claiming such fantastic beliefs as a carpenter who was God and who raised Himself from the dead! Although some believers may

have been affected by charges of being uneducated and cultic, these accusations did not invalidate the church's claim to have the truth.

Lack of education, popularity, or the opinion of the majority are really not arguments either for or against a called church.<sup>4</sup> "For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength" (1 Cor. 1:25). What the disciples saw, heard, and felt, they knew to be true. The life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ became the cornerstone of their faith. It was a prophetic fulfillment in history they could not deny.

It is true that Christ personally and visibly directed the founding of the Christian church, but His activity did not end with Scripture. Before His crucifixion He promised, "When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Soon Christ through the Holy Spirit led the New Testament church into corporate fellowship, directing them to ordain elders, to provide for the widows, and to exercise group discipline (Titus 1:5; Acts 6:1-3; 1 Cor. 5:1-7).

During the next few centuries, the young church mushroomed throughout the Roman Empire in spite of its martyr casualties. Church leaders, guided by the Holy Spirit, selected from various manuscripts twenty-seven inspired letters and narratives to make up the New Testament, which most Christians accept by faith. And in spite of internal struggles, the church leaders were directed by the Spirit to state formally some of the most essential doctrines of the Christian faith.<sup>5</sup>

The foundation of the Christian faith is based in part on these divine-human activities. And the Adventist faith, like that of other conservative Christians, is not threatened by the fact that men handled inspired manuscripts or that church leaders acted to preserve the faith by formalizing statements of belief rooted in Scripture and in the activities of the Holy Spirit.

At this juncture it is evident that any church subscribing to the fundamentals of the Christian faith, as do Adventists, could make claims similar to those they make. By what right, then, can Adventists claim to be the "true" church?

### **Claim confirmed**

After more than a thousand years of spiritual declension, the Holy Spirit actively guided such people as the Waldenses, John Wycliffe, Huss, and Jerome.<sup>6</sup> However, the growing oppression of the church, its control of governments and its efforts to extract monies from the poor by selling indulgences as "tickets" to heaven, demanded a change. It was to counter this oppression that the Spirit initiated the Protestant Reformation and once again chose new bottles to carry the "new" wine.<sup>7</sup>

From this historical experience and from Scripture, which endorses the concept of the priesthood of all believers, no Christians have the right to limit the activity of the Holy Spirit, to dictate His mode of operation, to decide when He is to dispense His gifts, or to whom He should give them. In light of what the Spirit has done to make the Bible central, how can Adventists make the far-reaching claim they do and further splinter the "body" of Christ? They believe that because spiritual freedom has become license and created such a maze of apocalyptic interpretations—supported by supposedly justifiable hermeneutics—conditions demand direct divine intervention.<sup>8</sup> And they believe that special revelation is the answer: it is no longer an option.

It would be inconsistent with God's pattern of activity not to anticipate that the Spirit would speak in a time of apocalyptic crises such as pictured in the book of Revelation. Those living during this time have a right to expect a manifestation of all the Spirit's gifts, including the gift of prophecy (see Joel 2:28, 29). And it would be paradoxical to acknowledge the Spirit's freedom and to endorse progressive revelation through qualified academicians while at the same time denying present revelation through inspired prophets.<sup>9</sup>

Uriah Smith stated it well when he said, "For, be it remembered, the gifts cease only when a perfect state is reached, and because that state is reached, which renders them no longer necessary. But no one, on sober thought, can for a moment seek to maintain the position that the apostolic age was inferior in spiritual elevation to any age which has succeeded it. And if the gifts were needed then, they certainly are needed now."<sup>10</sup>

Adventists believe that the Spirit has spoken through the gift of prophecy given to Ellen White by which He directed their spiritual forebears to formulate doctrines, to incorporate, and to choose a denominational name.<sup>11</sup>

### **Our unique message**

Seventh-day Adventists believe not only that they are a called church by special revelation but that their message and mission are eschatologically and apocalyptically unique.

In reality Adventists are saying very little that is new or that has not been said

in the past or that is not currently being said by others. The "good news" about Jesus Christ, the importance of keeping the commandments—including the Sabbath—and the belief in the soon coming of Christ are not new doctrines. In some form or other these have been believed and preached for centuries. And today these basics are still being preached, often with great fervency and conviction.

Adventists usually respond to such preaching with applause. However, with Paul they recognize "that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me. . . . But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice" (Phil. 1:15-18).

What makes Adventist preaching unique is the composite nature of the message that they believe was eschatologically conceived and supplemented by new light.<sup>12</sup> Some of the doctrines comprising this message had been largely forgotten, others needed clarification, and according to Daniel 8:14 it was time to give old sanctuary symbols a "new" sound. This composite truth expanded and became globally significant for the human race. It has polarized peoples within families and churches, and will soon do the same with nations (see Rev. 13:11-18). The Protestant Reformation is a classic example of what truth can do when nailed to a door.

The book of Revelation is replete with apocalyptic descriptions of a similar but more extensive conflict between the forces of good and evil. Adventists feel that their message will give new meaning to these apocalyptic symbols and new understanding to this controversy.<sup>13</sup>

Describing this conflict, John repeatedly draws his readers' attention to the people who keep God's commandments and have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ (see chap. 14:12). This vision emphasis was given, not because joyful obedience in response to God's love would become globally acceptable, but rather because it would meet with such resistance that divine intervention would be the only alternative.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore Adventists believe that in

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*There comes a time when reevaluation of one's destiny becomes imperative. We either forge new visions and advance, or become indifferent and perish. Our church finds itself precisely at such a point.*

addition to proclaiming God's salvific will in Jesus Christ, they need to proclaim the importance of such interlocking doctrines as the Sabbath, the pre-Advent Judgment, the sophistries of spiritism and Babylonish religiosity, and the immediate return of Jesus Christ. These faith pillars play an extremely important role in God's rescue plan for man.<sup>15</sup>

If this unique emphasis is as eschatologically significant as Adventists say it is, then a hermeneutic is needed to establish norms that will preclude a false apocalyptic interpretation. People must not be permitted to fragment this truth by whatever hermeneutic may be theologically popular. This makes certification of Adventist doctrines through direct revelation imperative. Therefore the angel advised John, "Hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (chap. 19:10).

Consequently, Adventist doctrines were not invented as a publicity device to counter their midnineteenth-century embarrassment. These beliefs were not designed by their spiritual forebears to give the Adventists an identity or because they anticipated that apocalypticism would some day become a popular media attraction. Such charges and psychoanalytic interpretations of Adventist history are unable to refute the religious testimony of those who formulated Adventist doctrines or to discredit the activities of the Spirit confirming these beliefs.

Ellen White said, "I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. . . . When they came to the point in their study where they said, 'We can do nothing more,' the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me. . . . And they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given."<sup>16</sup>

In micro form, the triune message of Revelation 14 contains all the elements of the final conflict between good and evil and contains the unique revelatory emphasis committed to Seventh-day Adventists. This message, with its three steps leading to the platform of present truth, is of vital importance. "The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received."<sup>17</sup>

Existentially the human race has arrived at the crossroads of decision. This interlocking "judgment hour" message is God's apocalyptic imperative designed to empower men and women to keep the Sabbath, to worship their Creator, and to disengage themselves from Babylon (see chap. 14:6-12). Soon everyone will worship the beast except those whose names have been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb (see chap. 13:8).

### A unique mission

The Adventist mission begins with Christ's commission: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). Together with other Christians, Adventists believe that their task is to evangelize those who don't know Christ and to lead those who do know Him to know Him better. This is basic to the Adventist faith and central to its mission.<sup>18</sup>

Their unique commission is to preach the end-time message without diminishing the truth of the gospel—meaning that the emphasis on Christ must increase proportionately with the "judgment" message as it swells into the loud cry (see Rev. 18:1-4). The gospel in the light of the great controversy between Christ and Satan includes the good news about a good God who in His graciousness is eager to save and heal.<sup>19</sup>

Consequently, Adventists feel that subordinating their message to the demands of social needs would destroy the effectiveness of their mission. When this occurs, there is less emphasis on the immediacy of the second coming of Christ. Though the hope is not denied, it is delayed. And there is less confidence in the prophecies pointing to the end.<sup>20</sup>

The Adventist mission is similar to Elijah's at Mount Carmel when he challenged the people to make a decision for God (see 1 Kings 18), or to John the Baptist's mission at Jordan when he prepared people for the coming of Christ (see John 1). As John preached, people asked: Who is this man? Is he Elijah? Jesus answered by saying, "If you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who was to come" (Matt. 11:14). Similarly, the Adventist mission is to bring men and women to a point of decision and to prepare them for the coming kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

This mission is also apocalyptic. In a world rampant with lawlessness, with erratic followers of self-styled religious leaders, and with most of the world's population worshiping on man-made days, God points a prophetic finger to a visible remnant. Adventists believe that they are a catalyst in the hand of God to bring about the final polarization of the world on the one hand and God's visible and invisible remnant on the other. The people polarized by the climax of the great controversy will be held together by their freedom in Christ and their common faith.

Jesus said, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:16). And insofar as Adventists are true to their calling they will fulfill their mission.<sup>22</sup>

Seventh-day Adventists are called by special revelation to give a composite message unique in time and prophetic content with a mission to polarize men and women for Christ and to prepare them for transition into a new age.

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\* Scripture references in this article are from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. Copyright © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 8-10; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 409-422.

<sup>2</sup> *Steps to Christ*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>3</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 27-30.

<sup>4</sup> This is particularly true in reference to the Sabbath. The evidence from Scripture and from such works as Samuel Bacchicchi's *From Sabbath to Sunday* still has not convinced the majority of Biblical scholars that their hermeneutic is in error and that the Sabbath is important enough to keep.

<sup>5</sup> See Kenneth Scott Latourette's *A History of Christianity, "Christianity Takes Shape in Organization and Doctrine"*, pp. 112-192.

<sup>6</sup> *The Great Controversy*, pp. 61-119.

<sup>7</sup> Latourette, *op. cit.*, "Luther and the Rise and Spread of Lutheranism," pp. 703-744.

<sup>8</sup> *The Great Controversy*, pp. 236, 291, 292.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis Walton in his *Decision at the Jordan* (Review and Herald, 1982), p. 32 f., quotes John Harris' observation on an inspired prophet's dilemma in writing original theology today without being seen as a copyist.

<sup>10</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Introduction, p. 27. See also Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28; Eph. 4:11-16.

<sup>11</sup> *The Remnant Church*, p. 58.

<sup>12</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 587; *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 445, 446.

<sup>13</sup> *The Great Controversy*, pp. x-xii.

<sup>14</sup> Revelation 19:21; *ibid.*, pp. 582-652.

<sup>15</sup> *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 30, 31.

<sup>16</sup> *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 206, 207.

<sup>17</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 259.

<sup>18</sup> *Gospel Workers*, p. 282.

<sup>19</sup> *The Great Controversy*, pp. x-xii.

<sup>20</sup> Horton Davies, in his book *Christian Deviations* (SCM reprint, 1967), pp. 128-132, points out that changes in a church's mission can be very subtle. These changes include: (1) social approximations; (2) maturation of the second and third generation; (3) demand for a more educated ministry and a more predictable form of worship; (4) changes in theology and the Christian life; and (5) increase in charity to other religious groups.

<sup>21</sup> Morris L. Venden, *The Return of Elijah* (Pacific Press, 1982), pp. 33-44.

<sup>22</sup> See Jack Provonsha's article "The Church as a Prophetic Minority," *Spectrum*, vol. 12, No. 1.

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*In a world rampant with lawlessness, with erratic followers of self-styled religious leaders, and with most of the world's population worshiping on man-made days, God points a prophetic finger to a visible remnant.*

# Use the Bible your people use!

*Do we unconsciously discourage our people from bringing their Bibles to church? Does the version of the Scriptures we use from the pulpit promote or hinder congregational response?*

*Viewpoint is designed to allow readers an opportunity to express opinions regarding matters of interest to the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The ideas expressed in this feature are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the church or the opinions of the MINISTRY staff.*

*You are invited to submit your ideas to Viewpoint on any topic; however, the editors reserve the right to make a final decision regarding the appropriateness or suitability for publication.—Editors.*

**D**oes it make a difference what translation or version of the Bible we use in the pulpit? I believe that it does.

Today our people are not bringing their Bibles to church as they used to because we ministers are preaching from so many different versions they are confused when they try to read along. They lose their thoughts as they try to match the words they are reading with those they are hearing. Eventually, many become discouraged and say, "Why should I take my Bible to church? The minister preaches from a different version from mine, so why not just go and listen? I'll leave my Bible at home." And they do.

If we really want to encourage our church members to study their Bibles, to bring them to church, and to follow along with us as we unfold the truths from God's Inspired Word in our sermons and Bible studies, I suggest we use the King James Version in our preaching.

I realize that many of my fellow ministers will not agree with me. But I believe that in spite of the growing popularity of many modern Bible translations, the majority of our church members still carry the King James Version to church and study from it. Some of my colleagues will no doubt ask in amazement, "Don't you know that the Revised Standard Version, the New International Version, and the *New American Standard Bible* more accurately translate the original in many places?" That may be true, yet these versions, I believe, are not the ones that

most of the people in your church—youth as well as adults—memorize. The King James Version is still *the Bible* for most of your people. If this is not so, why do we feel it necessary to announce, "I am reading from *The New English Bible* this morning" or "I am using the *New International Version* today," when reading from these translations? We rarely feel it necessary to inform the congregation that we are using the King James Version when that is the case. Is it not because the King James is the recognized standard?

I agree that some modern versions express certain thoughts more plainly than does the King James. I, too, take advantage of these. In my library are some fifteen different translations and paraphrases of the Holy Scriptures. I read from these in my personal study and sermon preparation. In a sermon, I may refer to the wording of a text as given in a modern translation. But for several years I have been using only the King James Version in my preaching. I have done so because I have found that more pages are turned when I use the King James Version than when I use a modern translation in the pulpit.

If you feel you must use a modern translation, at least pick *one* and use it consistently. Your people will surely start leaving their Bibles at home if they never know what version is going to be used on any particular Sabbath. Perhaps your church should also invest in pew copies of the version you plan to use and have these available along with the hymnal.

Some ministers feel that they cannot be "relevant" to today's society or reach the youth of today if they use the King James. They want to meet the needs of university students and intellectuals in their congregations, so they use another version. Have not these needs been met adequately in years gone by? Is not the King James Version relevant to today's needs? I find it so in my ministry to youth. We may occasionally have to explain an archaic word or an unfamiliar expression in using the King James Version. But I feel that this is a small price to pay for the benefit of having the majority of the congregation involved in Bible reading and following along with the preacher during the sermon. It seems to me that in order to

achieve this goal it is necessary to have a commonly accepted reference—and I believe that for the majority of our members this still means the King James Version of the Bible.

Are we doing our congregations and listeners a disservice by using other versions of the Bible in the pulpit? We may not be able to answer quickly either Yes or No. But if you want your congregation to follow you in your reading of the Scriptures, use the version that most people carry to church and feel comfortable with—the King James Version.

## The King James is still number one

In connection with this article, MINISTRY editors conducted an informal survey in five Washington, D.C., area SDA churches of various sizes and composition. While in no sense a scientific sampling, the two-question survey does indicate a clear preference for the King James Version. Totals for the five churches appear below. Because of multiple responses, the totals for the two questions are not the same.

1. The version or translation of the Bible that I normally bring with me on Sabbath morning is:

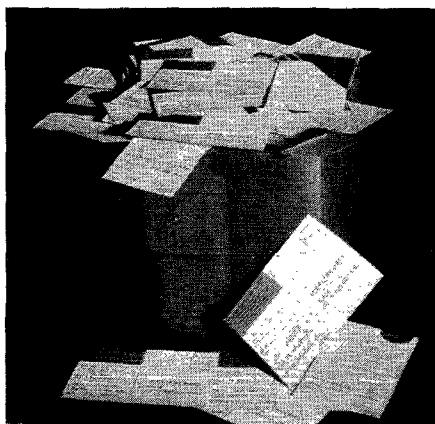
- 235 King James Version
- 47 *The New International Version*
- 34 Revised Standard Version
- 19 *The Living Bible*
- 9 *The New English Bible*
- 5 *Good News Bible* (Today's English Version)
- 4 *New American Standard Bible*
- 4 Other miscellaneous versions

2. The version or translation of the Bible that I prefer being used from the pulpit in reading and preaching on Sabbath morning is:

- 203 King James Version
- 57 *The New International Version*
- 39 Revised Standard Version
- 23 No preference or let the speaker decide
- 16 *The New English Bible*
- 12 *The Living Bible*
- 12 Whatever is most appropriate or clear
- 10 *New American Standard Bible*
- 3 Other miscellaneous versions

Charles C. Case is youth director of the Lake Union Conference.

*Do you feel guilty when you think of the interest names in your file that haven't been properly cared for? The Pennsylvania Conference had fifty thousand such names, and here is what they did about it!*



## No more guilt boxes

**T**wo years ago some 50,000 interest names from media programs and other sources lay dormant in what one minister only half jokingly called the “guilt boxes” of the Pennsylvania Conference. Most had not been contacted even once, and none had been nurtured toward church membership or had their immediate needs met.

Today almost all those neglected names are a thing of the past, and current names that come in are being contacted and nurtured quickly and effectively. Literally hundreds of these once-neglected people are *growing in knowledge of Bible truth* as they pursue Bible studies, read literature, or listen to tapes according to a nurturing plan designed by a local, trained lay interest coordinator.

What made the difference? A plan we call the Interest Coordinator Program. This program, developed in Pennsylvania, can work for you, too.

Seventh-day Adventists are good at collecting interest names. We get them from all manner of national and local sources. But once we get a name, we often don't know how to follow it up with a knowledgeable, quality contact.

I have recognized this scores of time as I have helped address envelopes to the names in various church interest files in preparation for public meetings. Some collections were meticulously kept in an orderly file, but obviously nothing much had been done in the way of contact. Others really could not be called a file, but there was some evidence of follow-up. More often than not the overworked pastor would hand the names to me just as

he had inherited them, obviously relieved that *finally* something was being done with them—they would be invited to the meetings and thus followed up.

Later, while working at the Voice of Prophecy, I phoned hundreds of Bible students—young, eager students ready for a heavier spiritual diet and needing individualized attention. It was impossible for me, from the remoteness of the Bible school, to know the resources available in the local church. Even when contact was made, too often the report came back that the student was not ready to accept this or that, or was not ready for baptism. Obviously, there had been no thoughtful meeting of a mind, but only a checklist attitude.

I am convinced from thousands of such contacts that when a name is received from a national media program, there is widespread misunderstanding on the local level as to what requests local people are responsible for filling and what has been cared for by the source program. This alone accounts for literally thousands of requests for literature and Bible studies that are never cared for. In reality, those situations where people are being contacted and their needs met with appropriate, individual nurturing are unusual indeed. In this work, the few capable, willing people who are not burned out are hopelessly overloaded. The nurturing systems are dormant or bottlenecked.

Because of this, the Pennsylvania Conference committee asked me two years ago to structure a program to improve the number and quality of contacts in following up media and other interests. This article is a report of the interest coordinator plan we have developed and are still

refining. The plan is designed to assist the pastor and the church in following up interest names by assessing the degree of interest, providing appropriate nurturing, and helping the interested individual grow into church membership.

Traditionally, all interest names have been sent to the pastor. The interest coordinator plan, instead, makes each church responsible for its own follow-up of names and offers (urges) training for local church personnel to become proficient in the arts and skills of ranking, evaluating, and planning nurture on an individual basis. In this growth process there comes a natural time to transfer the name to the pastor for the final preparation for membership.

The effective follow-up of interest names involves four areas—making the contact, evaluation, planning nurture, and coordinating and clerical work. A strong training program was built to meet the needs of each area. It is important that the training for all four goes beyond teaching the basics in an information-lecture style. It should include role-playing and observation of actual contacts being made. Then a final step completes the training: The trainee takes his turn at making a contact, with the trainer as an observer. The trainee gets the first opportunity to critique himself, then the observer shares his candid critique and affirmation. Sometimes the trainer takes a turn at making a contact, with the same procedure. Training should not be considered adequate until a number of such contacts have been made.

Although these initial evaluation contacts can be made in the home, using the telephone has several advantages—more



efficient use of limited personnel and time; physical safety (in certain situations); economy and convenience in finding each interest at home; no unsympathetic fringe listeners (you talk personally and directly to the interest); and less physical distractions. Another advantage is the nonthreatening, low-key atmosphere of a phone call, compared with the more weighted home contact. Often the degree of interest shown does not yet warrant a home visit, but a phone call is most appropriate. The person certainly doesn't consider himself an interest. Perhaps he has made inquiry on only one point. Our zeal can be overwhelming and frightening when we arrive on the scene with a bulldozer and hard hat, as it were, and we should have brought only a shovel.

The emphasis, then, is on creating a low-key atmosphere, a horizontal relationship that has no hint of spiritual superiority. There should be loving acceptance of the individual. In the training, specific techniques for creating this climate both in the home and on the telephone are given. An objective evaluation of the interest depends on this atmosphere.

Training individuals to make telephone evaluations is made possible by amplifying the conversation so both sides can be heard by all in the room. Of course, the same result can be accomplished in home visitation, with a trainer taking a trainee with him, but since it is awkward to have more than two persons (a trainer and trainee) on a visit, this is a much slower process. It is difficult to have enough home contacts to accomplish training.

In most cases, then, the evaluation contact should be made by phone if at all possible, but about 20 percent of the interests have no phone number available. If the degree of interest shown on the card does not seem to warrant a home visit, we have suggestions for handwritten post cards as a last resort. (Actually, we are getting a surprisingly good response to this last-resort method.)

There is a necessary step before the evaluation contact, however. We must understand and be familiar with the vast and varied nurturing resources available to us. We also need to know to what nurturing systems the interest has been exposed. The genius of the interest coordinator system is knowing from where the interest is coming, where he is now, and what nurturing systems will be needed. It is this utilizing of the wide array of available nurturing resources (as compared with the typical funneling of every willing prospect into personal Bible studies) that makes it possible to nurture a large volume of interests without bogging down the whole process. There must be a variety of options to appeal to different kinds of people.

So the first step is to explore all the resources available in your local situation. In our program, we guide the local interest coordinator in listing resources for physi-

cal, emotional, and spiritual needs. For instance, our search for spiritual nurturing resources would no doubt start on the highest rung of the lay-involvement ladder: the one-to-one Bible study. How many Bible study teams are in the church? Who are they? Address? Name? Phone? How many studies per week can they handle with comfort? What times are available? What content and format of study do they use? Encounter? Slides? Do they leave lessons to be filled out and then return to check them? Do they follow the old-fashioned, around the table, open-Bible study? This information is cleared with the Bible study personnel, and then it is cataloged in an accessible and orderly fashion.

Other spiritual nurturing resources that should be thoroughly explored are public evangelistic meetings anywhere in the area; the pastor's Bible class; cottage meetings; tapes (list contents and format; these can be handled on a loan basis through the mail); books on basic doctrines (list titles and number available); magazines (single issues on key topics, and also subscriptions); correspondence courses.

Think creatively about each nurturing method. Learn content; research facts, information, and addresses. Gather as much as possible for a resource library.

The same thorough, creative catalog treatment is given to physical and emotional nurturing resources. This could involve a trip to the Adventist Book Center. We find out about scheduled cooking classes and stop-smoking clinics. We discuss what to do when someone does not want to wait for the Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking. We talk specifics on how to order the Home Help Five-Day Plan from Narcotics Education. We list local church programs such as Vacation Bible School, summer camp, church school programs, media programs, times and stations. This is the coordination part of the interest coordinator's work—seeing to it that all nurturing systems are being used effectively. There must be no bogging down, such as overbooking one-to-one Bible studies.

This concept saves the Bible study teams for those interests who are ripe for that level of nurturing. This guards against burnout for the Bible study teams, and equally important, does not prematurely push this experience on the interest. It

cooperates with his growth pattern.

If the nurturing system is the genius of the interest coordinator program, the actual evaluation contact is the heart of the work. The object is to evaluate every name in its proper priority and timing. Some contacts will need to be reevaluated occasionally as they continue to grow.

Evaluation is a learned skill of careful listening techniques. We set a low-key contact atmosphere; we built a trust relationship, a rapport. Discerning the interest's knowledge of doctrines and standards is important, but more important is the attitude of the interest toward what he knows. An evaluation contact has as its objective an attitude reading on some new Bible truth that has recently been studied. To encourage the interest to talk freely, pretty much on his own agenda, and yet to collect the insights we need to accomplish our evaluation, take skillful sensitivity.

Some of the skills taught are techniques of questioning, paraphrasing, perception checking, disarming, attitude perception, effective prayer, and conviction awareness. Role-playing for these skills is important, but it cannot take the place of the actual contact. We have also used a training tape of actual contacts and subsequent critiques to supplement and back up the observation part of the training.

The interest coordinator program needs a simple and efficient clerical structure. As names come to the coordinator, he assigns priorities. Some should be contacted immediately; others should be allowed a buffer time for books and courses to be received, or perhaps even time for a second request to be made. Each name is coded and put in the holding file in whatever form it is received. Thus there is no needless copying of names onto uniform cards until after evaluation, and then only if the interest is put on plan A or B. Such names need constant growth monitoring, so are put on an interest card in the top-level interest file.

Names that have come in from other than spiritual sources (health and social-service names) are color-coded and also held in the preevaluation holding file. They can be quickly spotted for special circularizing. Periodically these should also be evaluated, using a special, gentle bridging technique from the source of their interest to spiritual needs. This must always be done in a caring manner, never

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*Seventh-day Adventists are good at collecting interest names. We get them from all manner of national and local sources. But once we get a name, we often don't know how to follow it up with a knowledgeable, quality contact.*

pushing unnatural growth. Our aim is to cooperate and make available spiritual growth opportunities when and if the proper time arrives.

Because often an old interest file that goes back for years needs to be updated, we spend one training session on how to validate that old file. We have step-by-step procedures to sift out the most likely potential interests, and several possible options to get them integrated into the interest coordinator system. All these methods of sorting and assigning priority to names are taught in a hands-on situation in the training program.

A most important factor of the whole program is accountability. We have discovered that both laity and pastors want to be held accountable for something as important as an interest. On the local level, a simple support group is set up that involves three or four people besides the interest coordinator and staff. One of the group's functions is multidirectional accountability, as well as affirmation. The interest coordinator and staff are accountable to the support group and the pastor. The pastor, in turn, is accountable to the interest coordinator and staff, and also to the support group, regarding the interests who have been turned over to him for final preparation for church membership. This accountability factor can be expanded to include the Bible study teams, also.

The support group meets monthly. It generally includes the interest coordinator and staff, pastor, elder, and lay activities leader. It is support for debriefing, affirmation, and prayer, and can serve in an administrative manner for the interest coordinator staff.

In our conference program in Pennsylvania there has been another level of accountability on the developed interests, interests that we know have had a substantial indoctrination, such as a correspondence course. When such a name is sent out to the church interest coordinator, a stamped report form addressed to the conference is clipped to it. It is to be mailed back after the evaluation contact is made and some nurturing plan instituted.

The "guilt boxes" are empty in Pennsylvania. The interest files of churches across the conference are becoming effective sources for new church members. People are finding joy and satisfaction in working together as a team to make sure that every name receives is given individual attention. The interest coordinator plan is working here in Pennsylvania! And it can work for you, too!

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A training manual incorporating most of the details outlined in this article has been field-tested and updated through three editions. It is now available in finished form and could form the foundation of a training program in church-based training centers or in individual churches in a conference. The cost is \$4.00 per copy. Order from Nash Printing, P.O. Box 503, Lansdale, Pennsylvania 19446.

# Who reads Ellen White?

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*Do church members who regularly read the writings of Ellen White differ significantly from those who seldom do? A recent church growth study in North America yields profiles of each group and indicates that although it may not be possible to establish a cause-and-effect relationship, differences do exist.*

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Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr.

**T**he relationship of Ellen White to the Adventist Church has been receiving a lot of attention lately, much of it having to do with theological questions such as the nature of inspiration, the use of sources by a prophet, and the authority and inerrancy of prophetic writings. This article takes a different tack. It reports on an interesting and important finding indicated by a recent study on church growth in North America. The finding? Those who regularly study the writings of Ellen White are also much more likely to be stronger Christians in their personal spiritual life and in their witness to their communities than those church members who don't.

In 1980 the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University (ICM) conducted a study of church growth in North America. As part of this research, ICM surveyed more than 8,200 Seventh-day Adventists attending 193 different churches throughout the North American Division.

One of the survey questions dealt with the degree of involvement in regular study of Ellen White's books. Recently a secondary analysis was conducted on this question. All those who answered "doesn't apply," "never," or "sometimes" were combined into one group, hereafter referred to as "nonreaders." Those choos-

ing "usually" or "always" were combined into a second group, referred to as "readers." There were 2,848 readers and 5,375 nonreaders. This article compares profiles of readers and nonreaders in relation to how each group responded to the other items on the survey.

It is important to note that the survey was administered in the 193 churches during the Sabbath worship services. Therefore it reflects the attitudes and behaviors of church-attending Adventists and does not attempt to describe those who have become inactive. It is a portrait of those members who compose the core of the local congregation.

**Relationship with Jesus Christ.** Here is a striking difference, for 85 percent of the readers chose one of the two strongest possible responses to indicate that their relationship with Jesus Christ was intimate. Only 59 percent of the nonreaders did so, a difference of 26 percent. Certainly readers see their relationship with Christ as closer and more intimate than do nonreaders.

**Assurance with God.** There is almost the same difference on having assurance of being right with God. It was revealed that 82 percent of the readers, compared with 59 percent of the nonreaders, are very certain of their standing—a spread of 23 percentage points. Readers apparently do have more assurance of salvation.

**Certainty of spiritual gifts.** Here 65 percent (combining the two top choices) of the readers are quite certain about

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having discovered their spiritual gifts, compared with 49 percent of the nonreaders—a difference of 16 percent. Readers, more so than nonreaders, see themselves as prepared to be led into the unique service for which the Spirit has equipped them.

**Money for public evangelism.** A small difference is seen in this area. Seventy-two percent of the readers favor more spending for evangelism, versus 62 percent of the nonreaders who do so. This 10 percent difference indicates a moderate tendency for readers of Ellen White's writings to be more supportive of investing funds in direct soul winning.

**Prepared for witnessing.** There is a highly significant difference between the two groups in how well prepared for

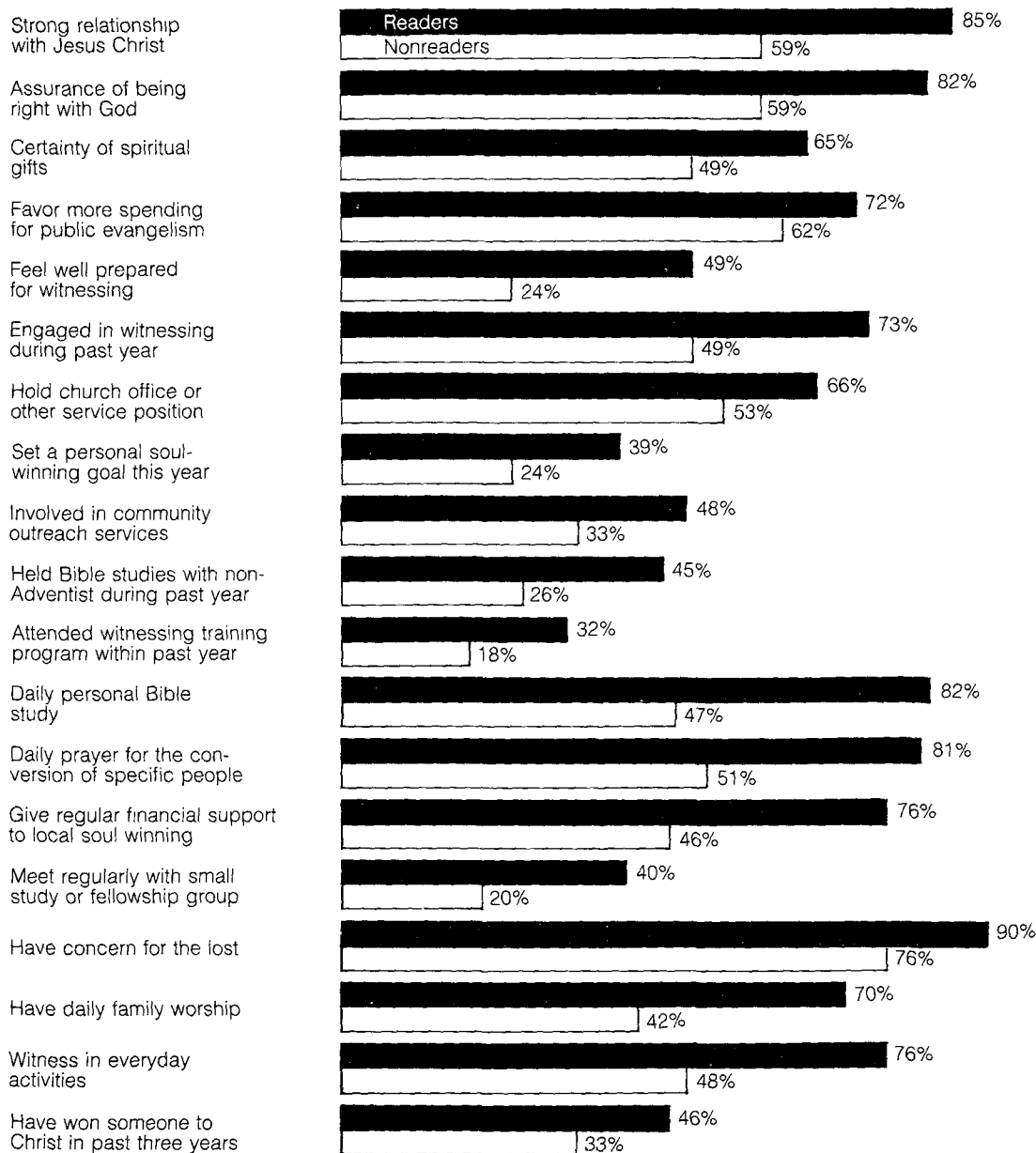
witnessing they see themselves. Using the two top responses, 49 percent of the readers feel well prepared. Only 24 percent of the nonreaders do—a 25 percent difference. Readers definitely feel better prepared to witness than do nonreaders.

**Christian activities.** The survey contained a series of seven yes or no questions. On every one of these items, Ellen White readers hold a distinct advantage over nonreaders. To be specific, 24 percent more had been engaged in some type of witnessing program over the previous year, 13 percent more were holding a church office or other service position, 15 percent more had set a personal soul-winning goal for the current year, 19 percent more had been working to win non-Adventist relatives, 15 percent more had been involved

in community outreach services, 19 percent more had held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past year, and 14 percent more had recently attended a witnessing training program. Ellen White readers seem definitely more likely to be active in service and in witnessing than nonreaders.

**Rating the local church.** Several of the questions asked for perceptions of the local church and did not deal directly with the attitudes or behaviors of the respondents. Therefore major differences between readers and nonreaders were not to be expected. However, the small differences that do exist (mostly 6 or 7 percentage points) all show the readers as giving a more positive appraisal. For example, 11 percent more readers than

In a recent church growth study, 2,848 respondents described themselves as regular readers of the writings of Ellen White; 5,375 indicated they seldom or never engaged in such study. This graph compares the response of each group to other questions on the survey. It does not establish a direct cause-and-effect relationship.



nonreaders have rated their churches strongly as "my kind of people." Readers are not negative people. They tend to view their churches in more positive terms than do nonreaders.

**Personal Bible study.** Several questions dealt with areas of everyday Christian living, and it is in these areas that some of the strongest differences between readers and nonreaders are found. For example, 82 percent of the readers usually or always have daily personal Bible study, while only 47 percent of the nonreaders do. This is a 35 percent difference—the strongest of any item in the study. Readers are much more likely to be Bible students than are nonreaders.

**Prayer for souls.** Here is another strong difference. It was discovered that 81 percent of the readers usually or always pray daily for the conversion of specific people, compared with 51 percent of the nonreaders—a difference of 30 percent. Readers are more likely to bear the burden for souls on their heart and seek the Lord daily for their salvation.

**Financial support for local soul winning.** The contrast continues, as 30 percent more (76 percent versus 46 percent) readers than nonreaders are usually or always involved in regular financial support for local soul winning. Readers tend to give more often and more generously to programs designed to reach the lost within their own communities.

**Small study groups.** The small study and fellowship group has been advocated in the Spirit of Prophecy writings and empirically demonstrated to aid in both the spiritual nurture of members and the soul-winning efforts of the congregation. The profile shows that 40 percent of the readers as compared with 20 percent of the nonreaders are heavily involved in such small group work. Readers are more likely to participate regularly in small groups where they study the Word, pray together, and share their Christian experience than are nonreaders.

**Concern for the lost.** On this question 90 percent of the readers indicated heavy concern for those who have not accepted Christ, compared with 76 percent of the nonreaders. This difference of 14 percent indicates that regular readers of Ellen White's writings are more likely to have compassion for the lost.

**Daily family worship.** Daily family worship is an important part of the life of a Christian family. It is usually or always held by 70 percent of the readers, but by only 42 percent of the nonreaders—a difference of 28 percent. There is more likely to be daily worship in homes where Ellen White's books are read regularly.

**Witnessing in everyday activities.** It was found that 76 percent of the readers and 48 percent of the nonreaders are usually or always involved in witnessing in their everyday activities—a difference of 28 percent. Readers are more likely to

share their faith on an informal basis, as well as in organized witnessing activities, than nonreaders.

**Converts won.** Here the survey shifted from subjective judgments to objective results. "How many people have you been wholly or partially responsible for bringing into the church in the last three years?" 54 percent of the readers were unaware of any, but 67 percent of the nonreaders were nonproductive in soul winning, an increase of 13 percent. While 15 percent of both groups could claim one convert, 22 percent of the readers could identify two to five people won, 3 percent of them could count six to ten, and 6 percent could rejoice in more than ten. The corresponding figures for nonreaders were 15 percent, 2 percent, and 2 percent. Readers actually win more souls than do nonreaders.

**Age.** A look at the age groups presents a challenge to the church. Only 5 percent of the readers are 19 years of age or under, compared with 17 percent of the nonreaders. Only 30 percent of the readers are under 36 years old, compared with 49 percent of nonreaders. The situation is equal in the 36-50 age group, but 46 percent of the readers are older than 50, compared with 29 percent of the nonreaders. The challenge then is to find ways of involving more younger members (35 and under) in reading Ellen White's books.

**Length of time as an Adventist.** A situation similar to that of the age factor was found on this variable. Those who have been in the church longer are more likely to be readers of Ellen White's writings. While 68 percent of the readers have been members more than ten years, only 53 percent of the nonreaders have been a part of the church for that long. On the other end of the scale, 22 percent of the readers have been members for fewer than five years, while 33 percent of the nonreaders are in this category. This suggests that the church may be having difficulty introducing new converts to a regular study of Spirit of Prophecy writings. Or it may suggest that the apostasy rate is greater among nonreaders, leaving fewer of them around after ten years.

**Conclusions.** Seldom does a research study find the evidence so heavily weighted toward one conclusion. In the church growth survey, on every single item that deals with personal attitudes or

practices, the member who regularly studies Ellen White's books tends to rank higher than does the member who reads them only occasionally or never. On a few items the difference is small—only 3 or 4 percentage points. But on most items the spread is large—in the tens, twenties, or thirties.

And these differences are found not only in the total profile but in each of the ethnic components. White, black, and Hispanic readers, as groups, are each superior to nonreaders. *On no item do nonreaders rank higher than readers.*

The study indicates that readers have a closer relationship with Christ, more certainty of their standing with God, and are more likely to have identified their spiritual gifts. They are more in favor of spending for public evangelism and contribute more heavily to local missionary projects. They feel more prepared for witnessing and actually engage in more witnessing and outreach programs. They are more likely to study the Bible daily, to pray for specific people, to meet in fellowship groups, and to have daily family worship. They view their church more positively. They actually bring more people into the church.

Of course, it should be carefully noted that this study does not determine that the reading of Ellen White's books actually causes people to have all of these spiritual benefits. The study only shows that there is a direct correlation between the various items and the study of Ellen White's works. But it is amazing that the contrasts between these two profiles are so numerous and so great. Certainly the implication is that the regular reading of Ellen White's material does make a positive difference in Christian life and witness.

It should also be noted that these statistics compare Ellen White's readers and nonreaders as groups. Individuals within these groups may vary widely in their Christian attitudes and practices. But on the average a striking difference exists.

These findings should lead pastors and church leaders to encourage and promote regular study of the writings of Ellen White. The church is especially challenged to seek ways to involve younger members and newer converts in this study. For it is these groups that hold the future of the church, and it is precisely these groups that are the least involved at the current time in the regular study of these writings.

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*On every single item that deals with personal attitudes or practices, the member who regularly studies Ellen White's books tends to rank higher than does the member who reads them only occasionally or never.*

# Adventism in perspective

*A recent mass prayer meeting held in Takoma Park suggests possibilities for your church.*

D. A. Delafield

**M**ichael Faraday, the renowned English chemist and physicist (1791-1867), once occupied a full hour in fascinating demonstrations of electromagnetic force before a learned society of London. There was thunderous applause at the conclusion of his lecture, and the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, arose. He made a motion expressing the society's deep appreciation for Faraday's genius. Once again there was a spirited ovation, but when the time came for the scientist to respond, he was gone. The conscientious Faraday had checked his watch and discovered that it was time for his weekly appointment with his Lord at the prayer meeting. He willingly exchanged the applause of London for the approval of God and chose to worship with the few saints in the nearby church rather than remaining with the large company of scientists.

Attendance at prayer meeting in Adventist circles may not represent a substantial improvement over the Anglican and Methodist churches of Faraday's time, and few demonstrate Faraday's faithfulness to the midweek meeting. Today within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, at least in North America, prayer meeting attendance runs between 10 and 15 percent of the church membership—smaller percentages in large churches, larger percentages in small churches. In some small churches, prayer meeting attendance may go as high as 80 to 90 percent. The church that I attend (with a membership of about 350) has what is considered to be probably the best percentage of prayer meeting attendance in the conference—about 20 to 25 percent of the local membership. What can be done to increase prayer meeting attendance in your church? One option for some pastors is the mass prayer meeting.

In 1969-70 the mass prayer meeting idea was originated and implemented by the

staff of the Ellen G. White Estate under the title *Testimony Countdown*. The subject for study and reflection: the nine volumes of the *Testimonies for the Church*, by Ellen G. White. The churches of the greater Washington D.C. area joined together for the trial run. Attendance for the ten nights averaged 1200 people. If the usual prayer meeting attendance of the separate churches involved in *Testimony Countdown* were added together, it would have equaled only about twenty-five to thirty percent of the average mass prayer meeting attendance. So the group prayer meeting idea in the pilot program enlarged attendance from seventy to seventy-five percent.

In 1975 and 1976 the *Testimony Countdown* program was revived in the Sligo Church, with approximately 800-900 persons present each Wednesday night. The mass prayer meeting idea had not lost its appeal.

In February, 1982, Fenton Froom, pastor of the Takoma Park Church, and I decided once again to revive the mass prayer meeting. For our study theme, we came up with the idea of a review of the great foundational truths held by Seventh-day Adventists since the beginning of this movement. The general theme would be "Adventism in Perspective." The program would consist of ten 90-minute sessions. All the churches in the greater Washington area would be invited to move their prayer meeting to the one central place. General Conference leaders would present doctrines such as salvation through Jesus Christ, the sanctuary, the Spirit of Prophecy, the Second Advent, the Sabbath, et cetera. A short segment would be set apart for the presentation of last-day events. Another parcel of ten minutes would be allowed for local pastors to speak to issues close to their hearts that represented problem areas in their local churches. There would be time for questions and answers. It would be a Bible seminar with emphasis upon Christ, the gospel, and the remnant church—its people, its message and beliefs, its mission,

its controversies, its hope for the future, and its Divine Leader.

At the time of this writing, eight of the ten midweek Bible seminars have passed. Attendance has averaged 700, and the keenest enthusiasm prevails.

The meetings have not been arranged around controversial issues. There has been no debate, no defensive posture. The reassertion of denominational beliefs has been positive and constructive. Truth always conquers error without worrying about erroneous concepts—even those currently making the rounds in Adventist circles.

The full 90-minute session for each meeting has been recorded on quality equipment and is available through Adventist Media Center, 1100 Rancho Conejo Boulevard, Newbury Park, CA 91320. The ten tapes cost only \$22.50 and are packaged in a vinyl box embossed with the words "Adventism in Perspective."

You may purchase this series of cassette tapes simply to listen for ideas and material for your own series of Wednesday night meetings. Pastors in large city areas may wish to gather the members from the different churches together and run a Wednesday night series of mass prayer meetings with the local pastors themselves filling the different parts and presenting the material in their own way. Local elders may want to play the tapes in part or in whole at a prominently advertised prayer meeting series. Many churches would find it wholesome and profitable to listen to the leaders once again restate the Adventist position on Christ and His precious doctrines. The time has come for the church to move from a defensive to a positive position. Time enough has been spent defending the faith. It is time now for the church to stand up vigorously for the truth, to listen again to the voices of the three angels, and to gain a new appreciation for the precious light God has given to this people.

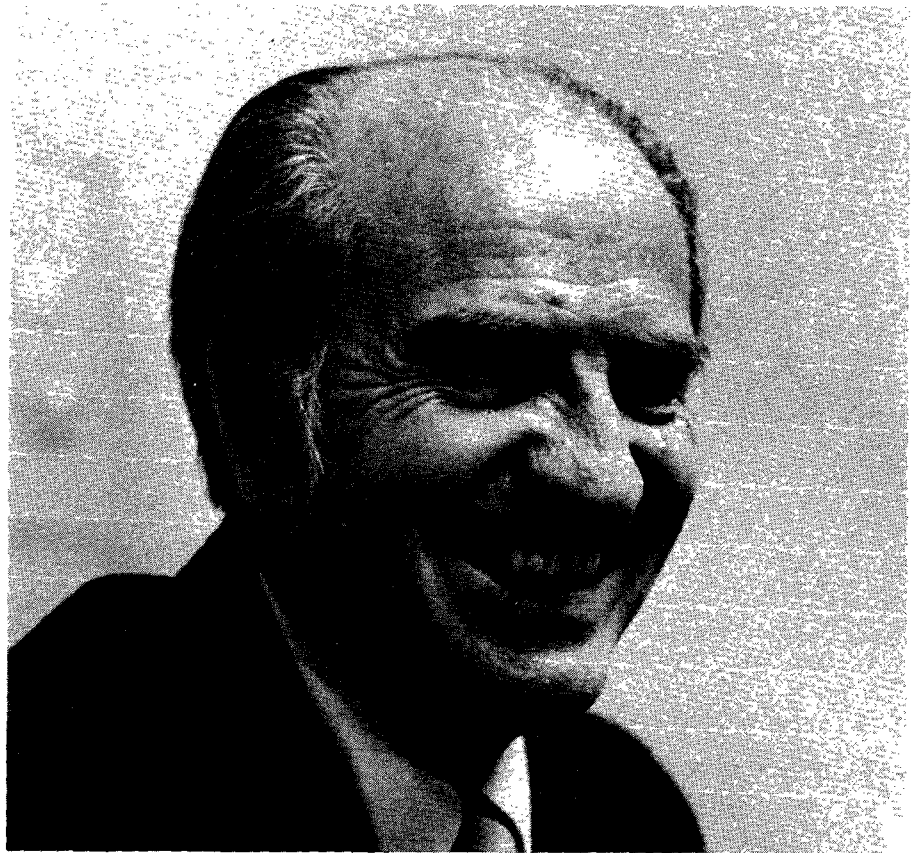
In large city areas where there are many Adventist churches pastors might plan a mass prayer meeting once a year designed as a Bible seminar that would provide real spiritual guidance for their people. Start with "Adventism in Perspective." The following year meet together and look at such subjects as stewardship; demon possession and exorcism; marriage, divorce, and remarriage; Adventists' dress and social standards; et cetera. These matters may represent controversial areas, but they ought to be aired, looked at, and discussed in the light of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Our people want information; they want guidance from their leaders. We ought to deal frankly with such matters.

God help all of us in times like these to feed the flock of God, to deal with issues and not circumvent or circle around them. "Adventism in Perspective" and the mass prayer meeting can be a means of feeding your people.

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Before his retirement, D. A. Delafield served for many years as an associate secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate.

# How a hymnal is born



*A new hymnal is on its way! In fact, it should be here by the 1985 General Conference session. As Wayne Hooper recently explained to Editor J. R. Spangler, the hymnal committee has a lot of work to do in the next three and a half years!*

**Q.** *Why do we need a new hymnal, or do we? Tell us, briefly, the history of this project—how it started.*

**A.** About fifteen years ago a committee met here in Washington to plan the music for one of the General Conference sessions, and that committee took an action asking that work be started on a new church hymnal. Then later an ad hoc committee on music guidelines also requested that work on a new hymnal begin.

We do need a new hymnal, and the reasons are those I set forth in response to your editorial (see *MINISTRY*, June, 1980, pp. 24, 25; April, 1981, pp. 10, 11). Basically, a hymnal lasts about twenty-five years. Ours is forty-one years old. Times change; literature changes; the ways of saying things in poetry change; concerns of people change. Look how much we're talking about space exploration, the environment, and reverence for life now—matters that were of little concern when our present hymnal was put together. We feel different in many ways about death and dying than did people of even forty years ago.

Another significant reason for a new hymnal is that we don't have enough hymns on some of the distinctive beliefs that we hold dear as Seventh-day Adventists. Any church that doesn't continue to produce its own hymnody is—well, I was going to say lifeless and stagnant, but at the very least just going along in a rut. We

have creative people, and they should be creating. We should be using their creative output.

**Q.** *My wife and I have been singing through the present hymnal in our evening worships, as I pointed out in that June, 1980, editorial. I said then that we were discovering numerous beautiful songs that we never hear sung in our churches. Do you still feel, in spite of the many beautiful unused hymns in the present book, that we need a new hymnal?*

**A.** Yes. It's true we ought to use to better advantage many of the lesser-known hymns in the present hymnal, but much new material has been written since 1941, both in hymnic literature and in experience, or gospel song, literature. We don't have any of that. Also there are hymns well established in other communions for many, many years that are favorites of those communions. We would love to have and use them, but they just aren't in our hymnal. Some examples: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise," "Be Thou My Vision," "Children of the Heavenly King," "How Great Thou Art." We don't have the tune for "Amazing Grace" that everybody loves to sing. Also, we don't have the best tune for "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"; the words to this hymn are terrific, but nobody sings it because the music just hasn't caught on. There are several others like that. A hymnal needs to be updated and revised

from time to time to keep pace with what is happening in the hymnologic world.

**Q.** I can see there isn't any doubt in your mind that we need a new hymnal! Now, tell us about the organization, or structure, the church has gone through to set up a system for producing a new hymnal. And how did you get involved in this preparation?

**A.** I was asked to be the coordinator of the project before decisions about structure were voted. I was to present ideas for a structural organization that would get the job done. So I suggested different areas of our church that ought to be represented on a committee and some of the people who might have the skills to do this job. Then I also suggested that, in addition to the people on the working hymnal committee, there should be a larger hymnal advisory group, which would give input by correspondence. Eighty-seven people were chosen to serve in this advisory capacity.

**Q.** Are you still the coordinator for this project? What is your official title?

**A.** Now that the organization is in place and beginning its work, my position is executive secretary of the hymnal committee. There are eighteen members on this committee, as you know, since you are one of them. The other members are Charles Brooks, chairman; James Bingham, Alma Blackmon, Alan Foster, Ron Graybill, Frank Holbrook, Charles Keymer, Rochelle LaGrone, Harold Lickey, John Read, W. C. Scales, Jr., Otilie Stafford, Mike Stevenson, Melvin West, Merle Whitney, and Ray Woolsey.

**Q.** I happen to know that one of the major features that recommended you for a leading role in the work of preparing a new hymnal was the fact that you are a very balanced individual. You don't lean toward any one style of music to the exclusion of others. You believe in a wide spectrum of music. In fact, your whole life has centered on music, hasn't it?

**A.** Yes. My dad was a song leader and an evangelistic musician, and my very first job was with The Quiet Hour as a soloist and with J. L. Tucker and his evangelistic meetings. Then I was a singing evangelist with R. E. Griffin in the Potomac Conference. So I have a very keen appreciation for music as an evangelistic soul-winning agency. I also have had the privilege of teaching music and directing choirs at both academy and college levels. My study for a Master's degree was at Occidental College, where the emphasis on music scholarship is widely recognized. So I've had exposure to both sides of the musical spectrum, and in my thirty-five years of

Voice of Prophecy work I've tried to use music all the way from Bach and Brahms and Mozart and Palestrina to the hymn literature and the best of the gospel songs, spirituals, and even some choruses.

I don't believe in a musical ladder that goes from down to up. I believe in a horizontal plane, not a vertical one. This is one thing that our committee has already discussed. Right now in our hymnal we have a separation—a section called Sabbath school songs. And quite a few of our committee members feel that such a distinction should not be made. If a hymn or a song deserves, by its literary merit, theological importance, and musical integrity, to find a place in the hymnal, then it should find its place where it belongs topically.

**Q.** What is the relationship between the General Conference and the Review and Herald in this project?

**A.** The whole program is under the guidance and sponsorship of the General Conference Standing Music Committee. All the way along, the work will receive inspiration and guidance from them. But because the Review and Herald Publishing Association is responsible for the completion of the project as a book, its board of directors also voted on the members of the hymnal committee and the advisory group. The Review and Herald is to be both the publisher and the printer. Technically,



*We don't have enough hymns on some of the distinctive beliefs that we hold dear as Seventh-day Adventists. Any church that doesn't continue to produce its own hymnody is going along in a rut.*

then, it's a publishing house program until we reach a certain point in our work.

**Q.** What did you first do to really get this project off the ground?

**A.** Before I came to Washington the first time, I sat down and spent several hours putting my own thoughts together on how the work might best be done. I've been thinking about a new hymnal for about fifteen years! I have quite an extensive library of hymnbooks and handbooks to hymnals because of my work with the Voice of Prophecy. In choosing music for our national radiobroadcast, of course, I have used a much wider scope of materials than just those from our own SDA musical background. So for years I've been going through hymnals and pulling out material that I thought might possibly be good enough to put in a new Adventist hymnal someday. And I brought this music, about 370 titles, here to the committee. I know all of them won't get in, but at least I want us to look at them. All the members of the committee are submitting lists of new materials.

**Q.** In other words, you had been working for years toward the possibility of a new hymnal someday, never thinking that you would necessarily have any actual part in the project! This and your extensive background in music certainly make you well prepared to lead out in such a production. Now, then, what did you do at this point? You had been asked to become the coordinator of the hymnal project. What was the first thing that you did?

**A.** Well, first I came here to sit down with the people in the Review and Herald and the chairman of the General Conference Standing Music Committee to discuss a plan of organization and overall budget matters. How much was the project going to cost? How many meetings of the hymnal committee would we have? How large should the committee be? On the last point, I asked for somewhere between 15 and 18 members. I thought this was the smallest committee we could have that would adequately represent all the different facets of our church and geography. We got 18. I asked for somewhere between 70 and 80 on the advisory, and we ended up with 87.

The first thing we did was to conduct another survey. But before describing it and its results, I ought to backtrack a little bit here and mention the survey that the General Conference took when it was still just thinking about the feasibility of the project. This earlier questionnaire was formulated by Don Yost, director of the General Conference Archives and Statistics, and was sent to 650 administrators, musicians from the SDA Musicians Guild, educators, choir directors, organists, and pastors—a real spectrum. Its purpose was to determine whether a hymnal project was needed, wanted, or feasible. The results of that survey showed that 66 percent of those who responded (266, or more than one third of those receiving a survey, did respond) felt a certain dissatisfaction with *The Church Hymnal*, and 73 percent said that either they, or someone they had heard, had suggested that we have a new hymnal as soon as possible. Other responses showed the inadequacies of the hymnal for meeting certain needs. We have collated all the handwritten suggestions that were in that survey and made them available to the members of our committee.

**Q.** *What were some of these suggestions?*

**A.** Thirty said we need more contemporary hymns and songs that are doctrinally and rhythmically acceptable and in today's language. Twenty were afraid that if we got a new hymnal, it might be worse than the one we now have because of the cheap musical trends in the world today, the sentimental religiosity so prevalent in some of the songs that are being sung. Thirteen said, "Please lower the keys so more of us can sing." And quite a few thought we ought to have more hymns for youth and children to get them more involved in the church worship service.

**Q.** *Were there any suggestions dealing with ethnic concerns?*

**A.** Yes, nine said, "Be sure to put in some good Negro spirituals"; but ten said, "Don't try to make the hymnal fit all minority ethnic groups; you can't please everybody with one hymnal. The hymns we sing in church ought to be so universal that they can be sung and appreciated by everyone."

**Q.** *If this is the case, what about trying to have a hymnal that is designed to meet the cultures of every country in the world? How do you feel about this?*

**A.** Our present hymnal, as published at the Review and Herald, is now used by the United States and Canada, the Caribbean area, and Australia. We are not attempting to make it a universal hymnbook, even

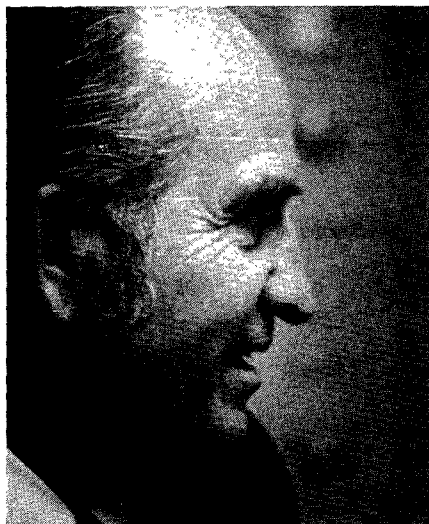
for all English-speaking areas. England has its own hymnal, and the Philippines has its own English hymnal. The new hymnal will probably follow the distribution pattern of the present one.

**Q.** *What was your next step after processing the responses from the earlier survey?*

**A.** I felt it was necessary to make a survey of all the pastors—the individuals who are using the hymnal every week—and find out how they feel about the present hymnal; what suggestions they would have for a new hymnal; what new material they would like to see in a new hymnal; which hymns they would vote to keep from the old one. We sent this survey out to 3,811 pastors, 86 administrators, and the 87 members of our hymnal advisory group.

We collated the results, put them on computer, and finished the report the day before the committee had its first meeting on March 31. As of March 30, we had received replies from 1,011 out of the 3,984. And since that time another 200 or so have come in—past the deadline, so we couldn't include the results in the computer, but we have used all the suggestions that were on the back.

**Q.** *Are you paying attention to everyone? Are you putting everything in this computer, or are you personally eliminating certain suggestions because of your wide knowledge of hymnology?*



**A.** We're making available to the members of the hymnal committee all the suggestions that have come from all sources. Many pastors put a list of new material on the back of the survey sheet, and we, by hand, made a typewritten list of all these titles. It ran to approximately 1,500 hymns and songs and was in every committee member's folder on the day we first met. They have all this material to continue using in their study. In addition, members of the hymnal advisory group and the hymnal committee and some members of the SDA Musicians Guild have given us specialized lists of new material, because of their wide acquaintance with the hymnals of other faiths.

We have entered this new material in the computer along with such information as the hymnbook source, the title, the status (whether the committee has voted to accept it or reject it), the author, composer, the copyright status, and the topic. The marvelous thing about the computer is that it will alphabetize all these lists for us. Then it will also resort them according to topics, according to hymn-tune names, or according to the status that we have voted for them. Right now we have a little more than three thousand entries in the computer. Oh, yes, we also entered the name of each person who submitted material. That way the committee can look down and see that eight different people, for example, wanted a certain hymn title.

**Q.** *In other words, of those three-thousand-plus hymns you've already entered in your computer, some are duplicates?*

**A.** Quite a lot of them are. We will be able to eliminate duplicates later, after decisions are made.

**Q.** *So you have this master list of suggested hymns in your computer. What is the next step?*

**A.** Our hymnal committee is divided into four subcommittees—the committee on tunes, which is considering the music that is submitted; the committee on texts, which will be responsible for examining not only the new material but all the old material that we are keeping from the present hymnal.

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*I've been thinking about a new hymnal for about fifteen years! I've been going through hymnals and pulling out material that I thought might possibly be good enough to put in a new Adventist hymnal someday.*



(Incidentally, nearly every church retains from 50 to 65 percent of its old hymnal when it goes to a new one. And it looks as though we will probably do the same. A certain number of hymns are central to all Christendom, and we can't do without them. Everybody agrees on that. We've already taken the first vote, in which we decided to retain 316 out of the 703 hymns in our hymnal now. That's a little less than 50 percent. But that was only the first vote, so if we had any question about words or music we didn't vote a hymn in. Many of these will come up for consideration again.)

The third subcommittee is the committee on organization of the book and indexes. It is responsible for deciding in what order the hymns will appear in the hymnbook, where the indexes will be, and all the other aids for using the book. The fourth subcommittee is the committee on responsive readings and other worship aids. Many pastors said they needed more responsive readings than we have now and a better organization of them, including an index. Many asked for newer, more modern versions of the Bible in the responsive readings. I think five or six were even brave enough to ask for some well-written litanies that would involve the congregation in special occasions such as church dedications, baby dedications, and even the baptismal service.

I have a real burden for this. Too often our church services are spectator events. So much happens up in front, and we must do everything we can to involve all the people. Many of our churches don't have choirs. I hope we will include choral or congregational responses that are easy enough to be sung by the congregation, as a call to worship, response to prayer, or benediction, so that they don't have to be entertained by a choir all the time.

Q. What you just said impresses me. I have been, for instance, over in Soweto, the largest black township in South Africa, where the people cannot afford a piano, where they can't afford an organ. In fact, they can't even afford songbooks. But they have their songs memorized by the dozens. And even during the taking of an offering or during the intermission, they would be breaking out and singing beautiful, melodic tunes and words. As I've thought of this in relation to our churches in the Western culture, I feel there ought to be more participation in music as an expression of the individual, not just listening to someone on the stage performing.

**A.** That was one of the items of philosophy that was voted by the committee—that all material in the book should lend itself to being sung by the congregation.

Q. Now that you have these four subcommittees and a master list of hymns on

computer, what are you going to do?

**A.** The committees will be working independently now. They have all the survey material, and I will be sending copies of hymns and songs that have been submitted, so that the committees can study them at home. We hope to meet in January of 1983, and again in September of 1983, and one more time in October of 1984.

Q. Is anyone helping you? I understand that your wife is involved in this.

**A.** My wife has been retained by the Review and Herald to do the secretarial work involved in getting all the material out. She did the bulk of entering all this material from both surveys in the computer, and the master hymn list, as well.

Q. I understand that it's impossible to put out a good hymnal in less than eight or ten years. How do you feel about this?

**A.** Well, we have outlined a three-year schedule; actually, it's a little more than three years—from January of 1982 until June of 1985—about three and one-half years. We've outlined a program that I think will get the job done if all goes as we have planned. If all the hymnal committee members and the advisory group do their work on time and as planned, it should happen. The computer is going to save a lot of time and help us greatly. We are



hopeful that we'll have books out before General Conference in 1985.

Q. Apparently you are pleased with the work accomplished at the first meeting of the committee.

**A.** I was delighted not only with the makeup of the committee and the different skills involved but with the diversity of philosophical views. We must have this. We must be checks and balances on one another if we are to produce a hymnal that will be eminently useful to our church. It cannot be extreme in either direction. We must have music for those well-educated, sophisticated musicians in our church (and we have more and more of them). In the middle, we should have the great body of material that is appreciated by everybody. On the other end of the spectrum we need some music that is immediately accessible. And we need some Spirit-filled gospel music to bear witness to one another of how we feel about God. All of this material has to be judged by the standard of integrity to Scripture and to the faith that we hold dear, as well as to the standard of musical integrity, poetic beauty, and elevated thought that will lift us every time we sing it.

These various subcommittees each have a chairman and are going to be authorized to do some work by conference phone calls and, of course, by correspondence. The committee of responsive readings and other worship aids will probably have more meetings in this first year than the other committees. It has been asked to finish its work by October, 1983. That way the Review and Herald will have a body of material to start work on. That's one thing that will help us to get the hymnal finished by the deadline. And I will be in communication constantly with the chairmen of the subcommittees, helping them in any way that I can with their work, gathering materials for them.

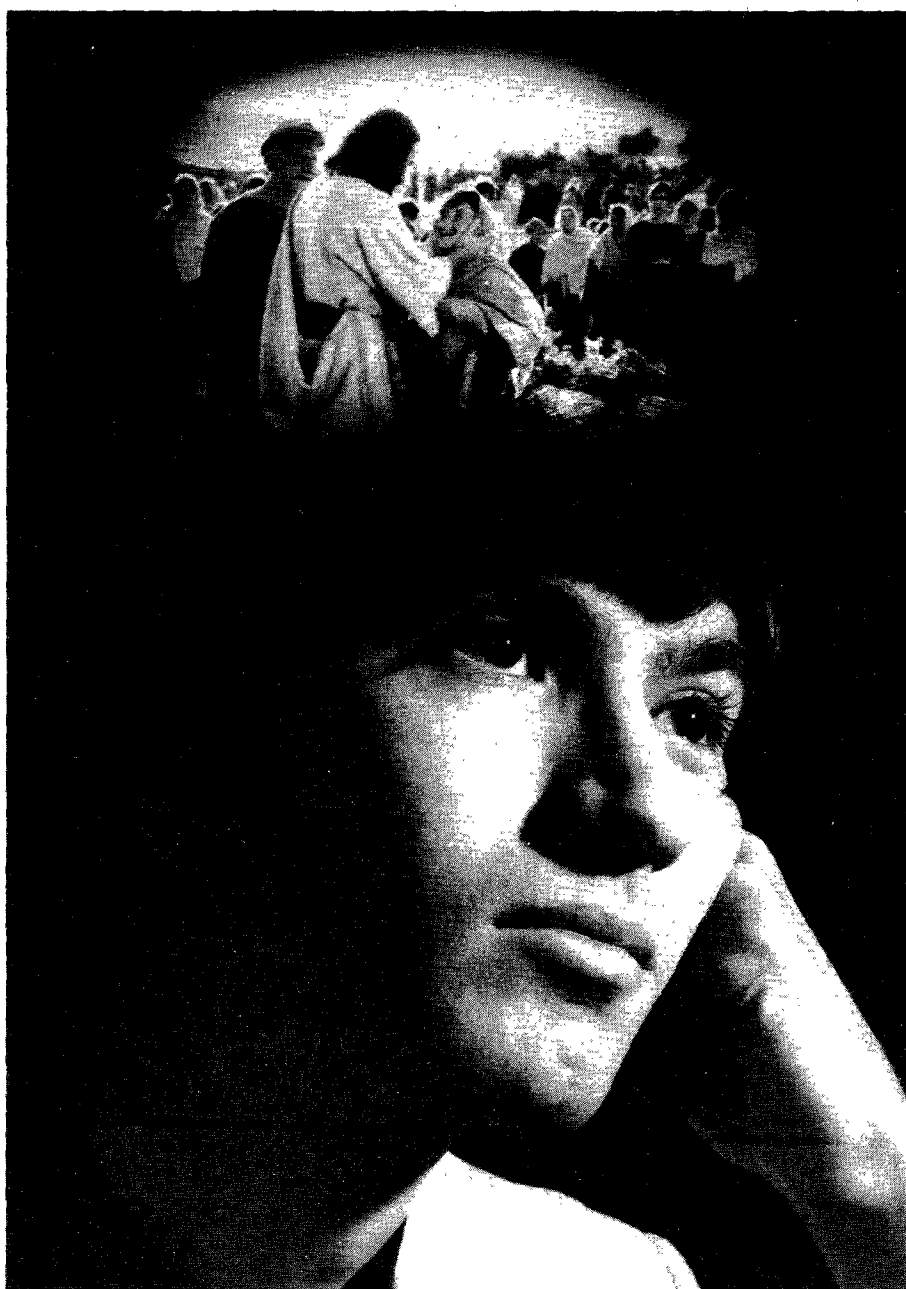
Q. One last question: Are you enjoying your work?

**A.** Oh, it's a thrill! I'm retired now and I have time to spend on it. I don't have the pressures of trying to squeeze this in with some other job. I am excited, along with many other people, that a new hymnal for our church is actually on the way.

*All of this material has to be judged by the standard of integrity to Scripture and to the faith that we hold dear, as well as to the standard of musical integrity, poetic beauty, and elevated thought.*

The mystery of salvation involves complex yet simple mental processes. These God-given principles of the mind enable us to turn from sin to holiness, follow the Biblical injunction to walk with God, and differentiate between truth and error. Without these mental processes we cannot be reached even by God; with them we stand apart as beings for whom Heaven gave its all.

## Transformed by the renewing of your mind



**G**od has placed within the fabulous, computerlike mechanism of man's brain certain great capacities by which we receive salvation. Without these mental processes we cannot be reached by the loving solicitude even of a saving God. With them we stand apart from the rest of the animal creation as that race of beings for whose redemption heaven poured out its choicest lifeblood.

First, there is the amazing principle of transformation. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," the apostle counsels (Rom. 12:2). Scripture and psychology confirm that "there is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God." (E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 250, 251). We are changed by beholding, "into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18).

The power of the human mind to turn life around from sadness to joy, from failure to victory, from death to life, from sin to

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holiness, is inestimable! Christian salvation is dependent upon the mental absolute of faith to grasp the unseen and conceptualize victory. When the trembling believer reaches out the hand of faith, there is One who takes that faltering hand, and a lifting power is inaugurated that can change human life beyond all recognition and grant new life and power to the believer. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

The Greek word for "transformed" in Romans 12:2 expresses the concept of complete transformation, not unlike the brilliant change of an ugly caterpillar into a graceful butterfly resplendent with all the colors of the rainbow! The gospel of Jesus Christ can so flow into one's highest intellectual centers of control that the life is turned around beyond all recognition. The new birth is a miracle, but this miracle is not solely some mysterious element which, like the injection of a miracle drug, mystically brings new life and spiritual capacity for fellowship with God. Rather it is, at least in part, the outworking of principles which are residual and universal in the human mechanism.

**F**or example, we who deal with the principles of salvation have experienced the power of the will. No one has ever yet come to Jesus in new birth reality until the will was placed on the side of Christ in obedience and enthusiastic surrender to salvation's divine principles. And once a person's mental powers are brought to the place where salvation in Christ becomes the craving, the hourly desire, the highest ambition, transformation occurs.

Napoleon Hill, in his book, *Think and Grow Rich*, made two basic assertions. The first is: "Thoughts are things." Like money in the bank, good thinking is an asset that can give life, strength, and success. Like debt and liability, negative thinking destroys. The second principle is: "Whatever the mind of man conceives, and believes, it can achieve." So powerful is this principle that even the physical body follows the mental direction so that a person's physique is changed into the same image as his thoughts! Ellen G. White makes a remarkable application of this principle: "Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death. Disease is sometimes produced, and is often greatly aggravated, by the imagination. Many are lifelong invalids who might be well if they only thought so. . . . Many die from disease, the cause of which is wholly imaginary. Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love, promote health and prolong life. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. 'A merry [rejoicing] heart doeth

good like a medicine.'"—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 241.

In spiritual change, the mental principle must continue to reach upward and grasp the realities of the spiritual kingdom, so that continual change can occur. Genuine conversion is needed, not once, but daily. Divine grace must be received daily, or no man will stay converted.

Secondly, there is the principle of vicarious experience. Our walk with God, in essence, is one that is imagined. Imagination is the ability of the human mind to project into reality that which has only been on the film of thought, and the mind can conceive imagined experience to be at least as real as an actual physical experience can be. Psychological testing has confirmed this. Vicarious experience is the principle by which the reader of a book inserts himself into the plot so that he is there! A number of years ago I read the adventure of Thor Heyerdahl and his companions on the balsa log raft by which he crossed the Pacific just as ancient Indians had done centuries before. My pulse quickened as I transferred the thoughts he had put on paper to my own mind and "experience." Experience? Yes! Because I was now "there." I was catching the flying fish that had landed on the deck! I was excitedly watching the huge deep-sea creature that followed the raft nose-to-stern for days, menacing eyes staring at us, threatening an imminent upset of our fragile craft with one mighty heave! Yes, I was there! By vicarious experience, of course.

This is the way faith allowed Enoch to walk with God. This is the way faith allows you and me to walk with God.

"No," you say; "we don't walk with God! He's in heaven!" But yes, we do walk with God. We walk with God in vicarious, but very real, companionship.

It is by this vicarious principle that you can break every one of God's Ten Commandments. Turn on the TV set. Watch that movie that was clearly produced to cover all the bases—sex, deceit, falsehood, infidelity, profanity, ungodliness, and crime of every form. As you do so, there is a point at which your own nature and character must either accept or reject what is streaming into your mind. If you really love—love with all your heart—the commandments of God, you will so rebel at this intrusion into the sanctity of your divinely oriented mind that you will react against

it. You will stop the intrusion by some deliberate action, even if it is inconvenient to do so. This is the sublime privilege of your will! As you perform this act of your will, a great sense of victory surges through you, bringing assurance that you are progressing spiritually.

However, if you are not really in love with God's commandments, it may be that the intrusion is quite acceptable to you. In fact, it may be that you have allowed it so many times that it is quite normal for you to accept it. As the violence, crime, and immorality continue, you become absorbed as by vicarious experience you are "entering into" the action, becoming a participant by imagination.

When we become imaginary participants in any action, we are, essentially and by all rules of the spiritual game, committing those acts! This is an important principle of the mind as designed by the Creator. It is also true that we cannot enjoy an imagined experience unless we accept the standards by which the action proceeds. Acceptance of the act of sin occurs when we experience fulfillment in vicariously engaging in the thing we would really like to do. This is the service, both good and bad, which the thought media—TV, radio, books and movies—provides. Jesus said, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). The Ten Commandments are first broken in the secret recesses of the mind, by imagined experience, before they are broken by physical action. Never is the latter committed before the former. Several of the commandments—the first, the fifth, and the tenth in particular—are violated almost exclusively by a mental process.

**T**he principle of the mind, therefore, which provides vicarious experience, is very basic to the claiming of redemption's realities. We can walk with God. We can choose the fellowship of angels, of God, of Jesus, and we can cultivate the presence and power of the Holy Spirit if we choose to use this powerful faculty. Linked with the first principle, the imagination can cause incredible change in human growth and experience. To understand these principles better enables us as Christians to pursue consciously a spiritual growth process and to process the assurance that we

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*When we become imaginary participants in any action, we are, essentially, and by all rules of the spiritual game, committing those acts! This is an important principle of the mind as designed by the Creator.*

have "passed from death unto life." As evangelists, we are enabled to understand, as the Master did, "what was in man."

The third principle is so crucial to the evangelistic process that experientially its action in many cases precedes the full interplay of the other two. It is the principle of conscience. Its cruciality to the evangelistic process can be seen in Christ's dealing with the woman at Jacob's Well. Christ had masterfully turned this forbidding conversation from a casual encounter into a spiritual search. The master Soul-winner knew well—better than any of us—that somehow He must reach the conscience of this proud Samaritan woman: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly." (John 4:16-18).

Until this point the conversation had been confined to symbolic talk about water, everlasting life, the Samaritan-Jewish estrangement, and Jacob's Well. As Christ skillfully incised and laid bare a hurting conscience, the woman sought to hide from the laser beam of the Master's spiritual searchlight, unconsciously sensing that her Visitor had touched the mainspring of her spiritual self.

"Before this soul could receive the gift He longed to bestow, she must be brought to recognize her sin and her Saviour. . . . The listener trembled. A mysterious hand was turning the pages of her life history, bringing to view that which she had hoped to keep forever hidden. . . . There came to her thoughts of eternity, of the future judgment, when all that is now hidden shall be revealed. In its light, conscience was awakened. . . . As His words to the woman had aroused her conscience, Jesus rejoiced. He saw her drinking of the water of life, and His own hunger and thirst were satisfied."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 187-191.

*Conscience* is defined by Webster as "an inward faculty that sits in judgment on the moral rightness of thoughts, words, or actions, independent of the individual's desires or inclinations, based on previously established ethical (or moral) standards." It is important that, as soul-winners, we recognize the implications of this definition. As humans, we are all "conscience-bound." Everyone is a product of what he has accepted thus far in his life. Early training, parents, educational exposure, and the choices made, with their attendant rationales, have composed for each of us a conscience. This conscience is an inner court of judgment, and we base decisions upon it. We can accept all intrusions into the mind with ease, if they do not violate this court of judgment which our past life has set up. If, however, an unacceptable intrusion occurs, either

revulsion or painful acceptance follows. Often the pressure of other persons or a state of weakness causes us to accept what we would not if we were strong.

Everyone born into the world has a conscience with a "clean page." As life develops, from the first primitive glimmer that differentiates between a right or wrong standard, a conscience is erected. It has nothing to do with Christianity. Communists have consciences. Criminals have consciences. Hitler had a conscience. No human being has ever been born who did not have, by the very nature of his being, an inner "court of judgment" by which accepted standards sat in judgment on his actions. A person may have no scruples to prohibit him from taking human life, but that is not to say that no other standards govern his life. The conscience which has been educated to adopt God's standards is without doubt the most enlightened, but it is only one of many molds which different cultures, religions, political systems, and family orientations give to the conscience. Of the ancient heathen, whose consciences were far from that of a Christian, Paul said, "the times of this ignorance God winked at" (Acts 17:30). And although this phrase cannot adequately cover all that is involved in God's judgment of us, it is theologically true that God honors the conscientious orientation of a person who faces His inexorable judgment, and He makes His divine decisions based on His knowledge of that person's experience and what use he has or has not made of his opportunities for advancement.

An example of a non-Christian conscience can be seen in a youth who has been trained from his earliest days to function by standards designed to further the aims of a totalitarian society. He is totally, selflessly dedicated. An admirable quality? Yes. His conscience leads him to intense application for a "noble" cause! He has read, studied, labored, and disciplined himself to be a leader. If slippage occurs in this dedication, his conscience bothers him to call him back into line. Taking human life is no principle of conscience to him; rather, the highest good of the state and the fulfillment of its objectives is a higher principle. Therefore, no twinge of conscience occurs if he orders the execution of a traitor. But his parents, also dedicated to the state, are one of his great loves. Deep in his mind (conscience) are

the principles they taught him. Honest work and loyalty to comrades and above all, the great good of a future society built on socialist principles—a "kingdom" if you please—these are the standards of a conscience just as responsive, just as painful when violated, as the Christian's conscience!

**T**oday in America we speak of reaching the "secular mind." The erudite of the proud cities live by the rules of today's materialism. They know no Ten Commandments, no Saviour, no Bible, no church. What can be done to reach them? One thing is true—whatever is done must reach the conscience. Perhaps that suave, erudite secularist was educated to acknowledge the great philosophers as his norm for life's principles and thus the highest principle to him is humanitarian good. The plays, the operas, and the theater that he frequents deal with the human problem. (Don't forget that there is a conscience in every theatrical portrayal!) As the soul-winner discovers the nature of the conscientious standards by which this individual functions, he is in a position to begin building that bridge that will lead inexorably to the Author of all good principles.

Edward R. Murrow, before his death, wrote a book and later a sequel, entitled *This I Believe* (Simon and Schuster 1954), in which he summarized the faith of the world's great personalities. Amazingly, practically none of them espoused the Christian faith. But nearly all held a strong faith in humanity for which they labored, sacrificed, and exerted their influence. Conscientious response came from standards involving the plight of humanity. Though not called by Christian terms, they were on the same track as was Christ when He looked down to this benighted planet and decided to die for mankind!

Some of the greatest deeds for humanity have been performed by self-sacrificing non-Christians. Some of the most moral people of the world are not Christians! Some of the most immoral acts of history were performed by Christians in the name of Christianity! This paradox spurs us on to discover what principles make the secular mind function so that we can construct the oftentimes short bridge to unite it with God. We must find this conscience and build a bridge to Christ!

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No human being has ever been born who did not have, by the very nature of his being, an inner "court of judgment" by which accepted standards sat in judgment on his actions. It has nothing to do with Christianity.



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# Reflections on the Reformation

On October 31, 1517, a young man dressed as a monk nailed ninety-five statements to a door in Wittenberg. Once more light from heaven was breaking through the darkness surrounding suffering sinners: God had come in search of man.

The movement that was sparked by those hammer blows has defied analysis ever since, though it has been thoroughly dissected. We have often approached it with purely academic and detached interest, rather than with a burning desire that a similar, complete, and final reformation might be born again, in our lives and in our lifetime. It is my hope that this review of four major aspects of the Reformation might put "hammer" in our hands again today.

Luther had no thought of starting the movement that followed in the wake of his actions. He was never able to account for the enormous consequences of what he preached and wrote. Christ and His work filled Luther's vision; he wanted Him to fill the vision of every man. Luther's work was a message that swept across the lands as a fire out of control, not a movement that happened in response to careful calculations and well-defined objectives. He "was like a man climbing in the darkness a winding staircase in the steeple of an ancient cathedral. In the blackness he reached out to steady himself, and his hand laid hold of a rope. He was startled to hear the clanging of a bell."<sup>1</sup>

## Relationship to life

Luther began by pointing out specific things that had a direct bearing on the daily life of the common man. He did not start his work by writing an academic dissertation on justification by faith. The event that triggered his first public action had to do with the masses, not with the scholars. A man was selling indulgences in the name of the pope, and customers flocked to him by the thousands. Luther's sheep were among them, and they subsequently came to him with the documents in their pockets assuring them of salvation. Luther was indignant. The people were given a false assurance and with it free license to pursue sin with unhampered



energy. They were kept in ignorance of God and of the gift to be obtained "without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1).

The Reformer was compelled to action because of the impact on people's lives. The people picked up the torch because they grasped the issue. What Luther expected to be a dispute on campus became the chief subject of discussion all across the nation. If he had dealt in abstract terms, his message would have been relegated to collecting dust on the shelves of the university. As it turned out, his attack on

the lucrative system of indulgences exposed the false gospel on which it rested, and the whole Roman structure came crashing down.

## A gospel cause

Though Luther's cause was initially acclaimed by humanists and leading intellectuals of the day, it soon became evident that they and the Reformer served different masters. He was far too much in earnest to settle for the easy compromises of Erasmus or to be concerned about his own academic reputation. He was not walking in the spirit of intellectual elitism as a pathway to truth and reform—he was walking on a bloodstained gospel road where he saw himself as one of the crucifiers. He did not share the humanists' confidence in man and in enlightenment. Their optimism was foreign to the message he found in the Bible and the truth it brought to view about himself.

While superficially humanism and the Reformation might have been *against* the same things, they were not *for* the same cause. One wanted philosophy and revelation; the other saw no hope except in revelation *alone* (*sola Scriptura*). One wanted to recover a simple gospel and the best of ancient literature and culture; the other was committed to Christ *alone*. One sought to cultivate faith in God and the virtues of man; the other declared everything hopeless apart from faith *alone* (*sola fide*). "I am reading Erasmus," Luther wrote, "but he daily loses his credit with me. I like to see him rebuke with so much firmness and learning the grovelling ignorance of the priests and monks; but I fear that he does not render great service to the doctrine of Christ. What is of man is dearer to him than what is of God."<sup>2</sup>

Luther did not completely extricate himself from the many pitfalls to human pride and self-confidence that prevailed in the world of the learned—as his frequently volcanic language testifies.<sup>3</sup> But there can be no doubt that he was bent on sweeping away all human pretensions to authority in the spirit of Him who had said, "Do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers'" (Matt. 23:8, N.A.S.B.).<sup>4</sup> Tired of endless human dissertations, he wanted God's voice to be heard in and above his own. Here the difference between him and Erasmus was apparent. The latter "was too much the

Sigve Tonstad, M.D., wrote this article while completing an internship in internal medicine at the Loma Linda University Medical Center.

slave of vanity to acquire a decided influence over his age. He anxiously calculated the result that each step he took might have upon his reputation. . . . 'The pope,' wrote he with childish vanity to an intimate friend, at the period when he declared himself the opponent of Luther, 'the pope has sent me a diploma full of kindness and honourable testimonials. His secretary declares that this is an unprecedented honour, and that the pope dictated every word himself.'<sup>4</sup> Such an endorsement and distinction would have been both senseless and offensive to Luther.

But they differed not only in the goal and center of Christian scholarship but also in its spirit and atmosphere. Erasmus' most famous book, *Praise of Folly*, was a satire on the problems and outrageous practices of the church. Luther is remembered as an expositor of the Scriptures. Humanism was clear enough in what it opposed, but it could not follow Luther in what he affirmed, what dominated his work with utter singleness. The Reformation was strong because it had a message of its own, not merely a critique of the existing structure. "Erasmus is very capable of exposing error," Luther wrote, "but he knows not how to teach the truth."<sup>5</sup> The students in Luther's classes came away with a personal joy and fuller understanding of salvation, not with a graying enthusiasm from months spent considering problems and reported discrepancies in the Bible. Teaching theology was to Luther the presenting of the gospel as utterly sufficient to save from sin.

Perhaps Luther sensed that this concern with the message of the Bible might be lost by transforming it into a lukewarm battlefield of systematic theology and academic dispute. Thus he wrote: "I am much afraid that the universities will prove to be the great gates of hell, unless they diligently labour in explaining the Holy Scriptures, and engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt."<sup>6</sup>

### Bible message central

In the end it was the central message of the Bible, not the Bible itself, that gave birth to the Reformation. Even Erasmus was, in a sense, a man of the Word, publishing a Greek New Testament that became the basis for many subsequent translations into the native languages of Europe. But "Erasmus was interested primarily in morals, whereas Luther's question was whether doing right, even if it is possible, can affect a man's fate."<sup>7</sup> It was the practices and superstitions of the Roman Church that worried him, more than the foundation upon which they rested. "Luther himself acknowledged afterwards, that in proclaiming justification by faith, he had laid the axe to the

root of the tree."<sup>8</sup> His "initial cry was not a castigation of the crew. It was the ship to which he objected. 'Others,' said he, 'have attacked the life. I attack the doctrine.' Not the abuses of medieval Catholicism, but Catholicism itself as an abuse of the Gospel was the object of his onslaught. . . . The Catholic Church had in his opinion too low an opinion of the majesty and holiness of God and too high an estimate of the worth and potentiality of man."<sup>9</sup>

The expression "The just shall live by faith" was the theme of the Reformation. With the understanding of that expression began a new life for Luther. "Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justified us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. . . . If you have a true faith that Christ is your Saviour, then at once you have a gracious God, for faith leads you in and opens up God's heart and will, that you should see pure grace and overflowing love. This it is to behold God in faith that you should look upon his fatherly, friendly heart, in which there is no anger nor unrighteousness."<sup>10</sup>

The battle cry of the Reformers was not *do but done!* To the multitudes steeped in a joyless struggle to obtain and qualify for salvation came the message that what man could never achieve by his own best endeavors, "God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin" (Rom. 8:3, N.A.S.B.). As they rediscovered the everlasting gospel they had the same surprise that men in all ages had faced. The message was not Do your best to get ready, but "Everything is ready; come to the wedding" (Matt. 22:4, N.A.S.B.). Instead of endless exercises and mortifications in this life, plus the purifying horrors of purgatory, came now the good news from the cross: "It is finished"! Jesus had stood in man's place and borne the consequences of his sin. His life and righteousness were freely reckoned to the believing sinner, giving an assurance that no subsequent spiritual advancement could improve upon. The gospel the Reformers preached was the recovery of the main message of the apostles—a message about Jesus, His life, and His work.

Not only did the Reformation restore the certainty of salvation by the true gospel, it also swept away false assurances

of a spurious gospel. It offered no life insurance for people determined to live apart from God. In fact, the first incisive sentence nailed to that Wittenberg door was a reaction against the traffic of the Roman Church that offered pardon for a small price and "lulled the conscience to sleep." "Our Lord Jesus Christ willed that the whole life of the Christian should be a life of repentance,"<sup>11</sup> Luther pleaded before people who were being deceived by the indulgence dealers. The "faith alone" of Luther was not the empty slogan of the neo-scholastics who followed him. "Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith," he exclaimed, "and so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them."<sup>12</sup>

In these days of fading ideals and man-centeredness, God is again going to bring back the message so clearly taught by Luther, and plainly and graphically summed up in the words of Paul: "For I delivered to you *as of first importance* . . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3, N.A.S.B.).

\* Scripture quotations marked N.A.S.B. are from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, and are used by permission.

<sup>1</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978), p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Merle d'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> As when he answered Erasmus on the question of free will: "My heart went out to you for having defiled your lovely, brilliant flow of language with such vile stuff. I thought it outrageous to convey material of so low a quality in the trappings of such rare eloquence; it is like using gold or silver dishes to carry garden rubbish or dung."—Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1970), p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> D'Aubigné, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>7</sup> Bainton, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

<sup>8</sup> D'Aubigné, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>9</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: The Beacon Press, Inc. 1952), p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Bainton, *Here I Stand*, pp. 49, 50.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Olivier, *The Trial of Luther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Pubns., 1976), p. xvii.

*The students in Luther's classes came away with a personal joy and fuller understanding of salvation, not with a graying enthusiasm from months spent considering problems and reported discrepancies in the Bible.*

## Does truth change?

*Receptivity to new ideas may be the mark of the educated person, but it is also the mark of the indiscriminating. Is there nothing absolute upon which to stand? We need open minds, but how open? Open to what?*

**T**ruth is ever changing and progressive, never static or absolute. In fact, what we consider to be truth today may be proved a lie tomorrow."

These words came from a dissident, youthful pastor as he handed me an August, 1981, *Science Digest* article, titled "Revising the Truth." "This sets forth my position on truth as it relates to Bible doctrine," he continued. Glancing through the brief article, I noted it dealt with speculative scientific opinion on the origin of the universe. The author pointed out that recent planetary probes revealed a shocking paucity of real knowledge about the contents of the cosmos. He substantiated this fact by such questions and statements as: "Is there any hope of finding out the truth about our universe?" "Everything we know today will be wrong at some level tomorrow." "Will our picture of the world be eternally under revision, new truths superseding old?" "Science will continue happily revising the truth forever, driven on by the joy of exploration."

Considering his topic, I don't deny the soundness of the author's logic. In fact, I agree fully with him in this particular area. When it comes to the origin of the universe, man's speculative ability is at its height. Even those of us who believe the Scripture record that God created the universe will never solve the secrets of its beginnings. Ideas on this subject will change like dress fashions.

But there are certain truths about the cosmos that stand unchangeable and undeniable. For example, the existence of suns, moons, and planets, and the laws that govern the movements of these heavenly bodies. Only because these verifiable and unalterable laws make it possible to chart their movements with unerring accuracy are man's space exploits successful. So there is a body of scientific knowledge that will never change. It will be, and is, expanded, yes. But never changed.

So it is in the spiritual realm. Certain absolutes exist. Call them what you will—doctrines, beliefs, fundamentals—they remain unalterable, immovable, consistent, fixed. These great bulwarks of our faith, the seventh-day Sabbath, the law of God, the Second Coming, the incarnation, the atonement, and others,

need to be expanded and understood more deeply, but they are irreplaceable and unchangeable. These are dependable and permanent hooks on which to hang our faith.

Does this mean we have reached the limits of understanding on these timeless truths? Never! I personally feel like Isaac Newton, who eloquently admitted, "I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." In reading Arthur White's manuscript on Ellen White's Australian years during which she wrote *The Desire of Ages*, I was impressed anew with how she poured out her soul to General Conference president O. A. Olsen, confessing her inadequacy to properly set forth the atoning sacrifice of Christ: "Oh, how inefficient, how incapable I am of expressing the things which burn in my soul in reference to the mission of Christ! I have hardly dared to enter upon the work. There is so much to it all. . . . I lay awake nights pleading with the Lord for the Holy Spirit to come upon me, to abide upon me. . . . I walk with trembling before God. I know not how to speak or trace with pen the large subject of the atoning sacrifice."—Letter 40, 1892.

Our human understanding of truth is so shallow. An eternity of study can never exhaust the length, breadth, height, and depth of God's truth, character, and ways. Paul knew this when he declared that at present we "see but a poor reflection" (1 Cor. 13:12, N.I.V. \*). But my concern is that truth, based on the Word and understood even so feebly, is to be expanded, but not repudiated.

Admittedly, Adventism creates a rather paradoxical situation in some respects. In teaching people, we emphasize the need of an open mind. How often in evangelistic meetings I have stated, "The mark of a well-educated person is to keep the mind open until *all* the evidence has been presented." We, of all churches, are foremost in urging people to search the Scriptures for themselves, to think for themselves and not permit their former ideas and prejudices to rule them. As one former Adventist minister said, "It must never be forgotten that it was Adventists who taught me to really question in the first place." Thus we are proficient in getting people to examine truth and investigate it thoroughly, recognizing its superiority to erroneous beliefs. But after having arduously worked with them to rethink and restudy their understanding of Bible doctrines, we then trust they will "settle into" or "become grounded and established" in the truth to such a degree that doubts or questions will never arise again.

There is an inherent danger here. Too often, by "being settled and grounded" in the truth, we mean there is no further need to study or think or reason again. Thus we encourage fossilization. Or if we do urge "study," we often mean head knowledge, not a knowledge that involves the heart. The apostle speaks of this as "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. 3:7). This is just as dangerous as fossilization, if not more so. We must have "the truth as it is in Jesus" warm from Heaven in our heart (see Eph. 4:21). Jesus declared Himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). If truth does not become a vibrant, living reality, if it does not become a part of

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*Space probes constantly reveal expanded vistas of scientific truth. But scientists do not, therefore, jettison the very principles that make these probes possible. They build on them and expand them, but they do not deny them.*



our spiritual flesh and blood, if it does not constantly expand, along with our understanding of the Lord Jesus, into something more real and personal and precious, then it will become legalistic, empty, and meaningless. Is not this what has happened for too many of us with such doctrines as the sanctuary, the Sabbath, salvation? Even the basic teaching of Christ's return is too rarely heard from our pulpits because it has too often lost its reality in our daily Christian experience. Shall we repudiate these great truths, then, because we have allowed them to fossilize and stagnate? Space probes constantly reveal expanded vistas of scientific

truth. But scientists do not, therefore, jettison the very principles that make these probes possible. They build on them and expand them, but they do not deny them.

The beauty of spiritual truth is found in experiencing it. Tasting and eating the Word becomes a most delightful experience. We feast on the bread of life, and in so doing we grow in understanding and appreciation of truth.—J.R.S.

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## Letters

*Continued*

successful pastor. Yet the choice to remain or move is largely beyond my control. I am left to gamble on every call I receive, knowing that the possibility of my being reassigned without consultation within my present conference increases the longer I choose to stay where I am. In short, the position of the parish pastor would be enhanced if his church knew he had greater control over his future.

The candor of the editorial encourages me. But what is going to happen now? The answer may be found in an understanding of *MINISTRY's* subtitle—A Magazine for Clergy. This could mean that *MINISTRY* is working on behalf of clergy (as the editorial seems to suggest). On the other hand, the subtitle could be understood as a prescription of what is seen as good for clergy by those who think they know better. The fact that the magazine is sent to clergy rather than subscribed to by clergy might be seen as supporting that understanding. It would seem that the place of the parish pastor is going to be determined by those of you who are not parish pastors.—Ken Schander, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

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In the field we hear so often that we hold the most important position in the church, yet policies, practices, and pressure to "succeed" always seem to be a denial of this "high calling." I've seen men who have worked so well with a congregation and who have been such successful soul winners that they have been pulled into an office job and virtually never heard from again except in letters. I pray that your editorial may help us find real ways to keep our best men in the pastorate and let those who enjoy sitting at desks and writing letters fill the administrative positions. When the front line is strong, the battle can still be won even when the generals make occasional errors. But if the front line is weak, it doesn't make much difference what comes from the office.—

Ronald H. Carlson, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

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Thank you for the article "What's Wrong With Being a Pastor?" (June, 1982). If the four recommendations listed there were implemented, our work would see a drastic change for the finishing of God's work on earth. I have often seen, as you have, strong leaders and outstanding preachers taken from the church and placed in the conference office in the name of promoting the work of the church. What a grave mistake we have been making over the years! It is going to take strong leadership from administrators, and radical changes, to get the church back where it ought to be. Thank God that you, as an administrator, have not forgotten the high office of the pastor and have the courage to say so. May God give us more men in administrative office who remember.—Dennis Ross, Jr., Miami, Florida.

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Having made a lifetime commitment to pastoral evangelism, I deeply resent all the pressure in our system to move into something else in order to progress "up the ladder." Your editorial was right on target. There are three additional items I would add to the list of recommendations you gave there:

1. Require administrators and departmental secretaries at all levels to return to a pastorate every seven years for at least one year. In order to restore credibility to the ordination vow we have all taken, this is essential. Also, there are the obvious advantages that would come from front-line action on the part of many of our most capable workers.

2. Instead of office-based secretaries in charge of various departments, recognize pastors who have strengths in these areas and whose churches could serve as working models in a specific area. Elect this pastor for a two- or three-year term and give him a secretary. This would accomplish more

and save money.

3. Isn't it time for the church to take a bold step and cut out a major portion of the administrative overhead? Nothing would boost the morale of pastors more than eliminating 10 to 20 percent of the tithe that is used by the unions and General Conference and giving it back to the local church for operation.

Thank you again for your bold statement on pastoral ministry.—Jere Webb, Ooltewah, Tennessee.

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Your article on the pastorate (June, 1982) was most timely. I am a licensed minister not yet ordained. Already thoughts have crept into my mind, and I have turned my eyes to conference office positions because I have sensed the "simplicity" of the pastorate in our great organizational system. I have heard that being "just a pastor" for any length of time denotes little intellectual or leadership growth. The old "ladder of success" is still very real in the church. The members watch the young pastor to see how far up he will go. This is unfortunate when the pastorate is so exciting and full of variety and successes.

Thank you for your empathy; I ate every word. Thank you for uplifting what God has already uplifted. Thank you for reminding us that our lives can find total fulfillment in the pastorate.—Robert Fekete, Richview, Illinois.

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I would like to say a hearty Amen to the editorial "What's Wrong With Being a Pastor?" I believe this hits the nail on the head, and I admire the courage it took to express these thoughts in writing. I hope the suggestions given there for making the role of the pastor more effective will not be overlooked by those who are in a position to implement them. The pastoral ministry is one of the most difficult, challenging, and also rewarding professions in our church. In order to be a successful pastor, one must feel that he is an important link in the structure of the church. I believe this editorial has taken a big step toward creating such an image for the local pastor.—John R. Loor, Jr., Covington, Kentucky.

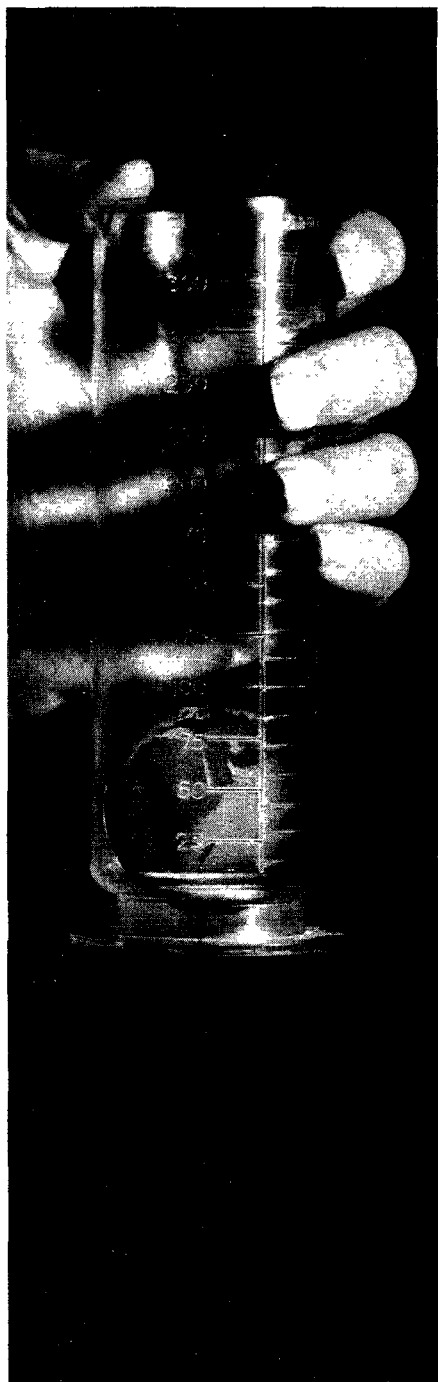
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### Understanding Ellen White

I want to express my appreciation for the openness and comprehensiveness of Warren Johns's article in the June issue—"Ellen White: Prophet or Plagiarist?" I have been waiting (not very patiently, I fear) for something like this to appear. It will be useful in helping the church toward a more accurate and adequate understanding of the ministry of Ellen White. While one might quibble at various points, and while the article does not say all that needs to be said (as the author notes), my overall reaction is that it makes a much-needed contribution.—Fritz Guy, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

## Science has its limits!

*The world today has little doubt that the scientific method is the proper way to arrive at the truth about the universe. But science is unable to answer some of life's most basic and important issues.*



**S**cience is normally thought of as a study of the natural world—a process whereby people attempt to understand how the constituents of the universe interact to produce the beautiful and varied phenomena that we see around us. On the other hand, science is a method—a particular procedure—by which a scientist operates. So interwoven are the method and the subject that it is easy to confuse them. By stating that science is a method, one deemphasizes the collection of facts and figures that must accompany a serious study of nature, and one suggests that the method of science can be applied to other areas of study.

The classical presentation of the scientific method suggests that science proceeds by a series of steps. Step 1: A scientist makes some observation of a particular phenomenon. Step 2: He develops a tentative explanation, called a model or a hypothesis. Step 3: The scientist tests the hypothesis by making further observations and checking whether they agree or disagree with his hypothesis. (That's because a good hypothesis not only explains the previous observations but also suggests additional relationships) Step 4: If the new observations do not agree with the hypothesis, the scientist may do one of two things: He may modify the hypothesis, if the disagreements are not major, and then resume testing; that is, he returns to step 3. Or he may scrap the hypothesis entirely and develop a new one, returning to step 2. If the new observations *do* agree with the hypothesis, *and* the hypothesis has been tested only a few times, he continues testing; that is, he returns to step 3. Or if the hypothesis has been tested successfully many times, it is raised to the status of a *theory*. The testing generally continues.

We see that this method depends entirely on observation and represents an orderly way of assimilating and organizing

knowledge. A scientist attempts to organize knowledge and compare new information with his previous understanding. Implicit in this process is the concept of repeatability. A single event does not constitute sufficient evidence to build a theory or even a hypothesis. Generally, a hypothesis must be tested and supported by other independent researchers before it can be accepted by the scientific community at large.

There are other requirements that a theory or hypothesis must meet before it can be generally accepted. As previously mentioned, a good hypothesis must predict new observations. An explanation that cannot be tested is not a useful scientific statement, even though it might be true. Thus, while you might assert "God made it that way" in order to explain craters on the moon, this is not a good scientific hypothesis. It may be a very good philosophical statement, but it is not a useful scientific one, because there is no way to verify the truthfulness of it by further observations and the application of other theories.

Another more subjective attribute of an acceptable scientific hypothesis is its simplicity. Usually scientists are striving to find the simplest yet most general explanation that they can. As an example, do the planets really move around the sun? Or does everything move around the earth? It is possible to adopt the latter view and develop the necessary equations to predict and describe the motion of the planets in this geocentric system in detail. However, the heliocentric model explains all the data in a much more simple and less complicated way. Thus it is the one adopted by science.

Taking the requirement of simplicity one step further, science generally does not accept a hypothesis that is as complicated as the phenomenon itself. That is, if one must attach all sorts of qualifiers, conditions, and exceptions, then the hypothesis is not regarded as being valuable. For example, there are several independent ways of determining the length of time Planet Earth has been in existence. Without going into all the details, these predict

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a range of ages, all of them on the order of millions or billions of years. Now it is possible to formulate a specific explanation or exception for *each* of these several methods, questioning their accuracy and thus allowing a short time scale for earth's history! However, by the time all the exceptions and possible conditions are attached, the final model becomes so complicated that it is untenable for even the scientist who was hoping to find the earth to be only a few thousand years old based solely on the *physical* evidence.

The concern for repeatability and independent verification somewhat limits the types of phenomena amenable to a scientific understanding. Science definitely has certain limitations, and scientists must operate by a set of rules. In order for one to understand the theories and results of science fully, it is necessary to realize its limitations. It is also necessary to be aware of the basic assumptions that may be present in the logical processes that culminate in a particular conclusion. It is important to put any statements or results of science into their proper perspective.

The aspect of repeatability is of primary importance. Indeed, modern science was able to develop only because the observation was made that nature seems to behave in an orderly and consistent manner. An experiment done at one particular time will yield the same results if repeated at any later time under identical conditions. If the universe were being run in a way such that the basic rules were constantly being changed, science could not exist. If an experiment would give different results when the time or location is changed, then no general rules or laws could be derived. A possible exception is a change in the rules according to a *regular* pattern. In such a case, the pattern of change could be determined. An example would be a situation in which all experiments done on Tuesdays would be similar, but would give different results from Friday's experiments; or in which the results change from day to day in a regular manner that can be predicted from previous observations.

Thus single unique events that are not repeatable and cannot be scrutinized by several independent observers at will are outside the realm of science. Phenomena that follow certain rules but repeat so seldom that they cannot be observed in a systematic way must also lie somewhat outside the realm of science. Perhaps at a future date such phenomena will become part of science.

Another constraint is that science is concerned with the *how* of nature rather than the *why*. Thus questions of ultimate reasons behind certain phenomena are outside the realm of science. Science is restricted to empirical observations and the process whereby models are developed explaining the relationships observed in these observations.

A scientist has no other alternative but

to follow the scientific method and to develop a hypothesis or model that agrees with these observations. Implicit within the model are usually several assumptions. The most desirable model is one that best fits the observations with the least number of assumptions or the most reasonable assumptions. A scientific conclusion then must be understood in light of these basic assumptions and the fundamental limitations of science. Science studies the orderly, repeated events in nature. The general laws, such as Newton's laws, are really statements that matter behaves in the same way at all times and in all places, given the same conditions. In a God-run universe this is a statement that He is an orderly and consistent God. However, science is not especially concerned with the reason *why* nature is orderly, but rather with the rules by which it is run. Most scientists study nature without a concern of using the results to test an attribute of God; that is, they are generally more interested in explaining the phenomena, and they are less interested in "nonscientific" philosophical discussions.

However, a Christian can use science and nature as a means of studying an aspect of God's character. This perhaps can be considered nonscientific, but it is an important part of a Christian understanding of the universe.

Returning to our previous example of the determination of ages, we quickly discover that science ascribes very old ages to the earth, our sun, the stars, and the universe. These age estimates come from the best scientific models that we have—models based upon present understandings of nature's processes within the limited scope of our observations.

The Christian can seek to understand how these ages can be made consistent with his belief in the way God operates. In this sense one can be concerned with how old the stars *really* are. Science only gives numbers that must be understood within the context of how they are derived and of the limitation that they may not represent ultimate reality. The best scientific models give ages that can be thought of simply as useful parameters, however large they may be. Use of these parameters may lead to further investigation. By working with these age parameters, one only admits that within the scientific framework the universe *appears* to have, or at least is *best described* by, an age of billions of years.

Furthermore, the current scientific models are by no means complete and final. The large amount of information that is now known is in reality a small fraction of what could be discovered. Several different models may explain the observations equally well. In this case one must choose between them on the basis of other philosophical or religious criteria. There is no comprehensive hypothesis that explains *all* the observations without any difficulty.

We cannot say how God must act or why He behaves in a certain way. It is quite possible that He does not run the universe exactly the same way at all times. Otherwise, Creation week is not possible, unless such acts are presently being done. He certainly can cause events that are "miracles" in the scientific sense for which there is no explanation in terms of the *known* general laws, but this does not imply that He acts in an inconsistent manner. The existence of angels suggests that our knowledge is incomplete. Presumably there are certain natural laws for angel material, but because we do not repeatedly observe angels, we do not know their physics. Until we are able to determine the basic laws of angel material, they will be outside the realm of science.

This is not to say God is violating natural law. He is the source of law, and it is established operationally by His method of running the universe. We can observe and perceive only an exceedingly small portion of His activity. Certainly God can do things that violate our small understanding, and we must not insist that God must do things in a particular way. Yet He cannot violate His own established laws.

A God with infinite power has the ability to run the universe in any way He wishes. He could have called the entire universe into existence only a short time ago with all the appearances of having a great age, if He would so choose. Science can only propose that within the framework of the assumptions and the best available model, our sun is about 4.5 billion years old. It cannot say with absolute certainty that it is *really* any particular age. The reality of science is no more than what the scientific method can observe and interpret. Reality beyond the scope of science must be accepted on the basis of confidence in the integrity of the personalities through whom this information is revealed.

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*Science is concerned with the how of nature rather than the why. Thus questions of ultimate reasons behind certain phenomena are outside the realm of science. Science is restricted to empirical observations.*

## Adventures in ministry

*This pastor's wife is excited about being on the ministerial team. As she explains how she combines the challenges of being a wife and mother with those of being an evangelistic co-worker, we think you'll get excited too!*



**W**hy don't you go out and visit with your husband today? We'll take care of your children." This welcome offer came from some of the girls on the evangelistic team. We were nearing the end of a thrilling series of meetings in the Philip-

*Teenie Finley, wife of Mark Finley, who is director of the Lake Union Soul Winning Institute, plays a major role in this training ministry. Although she is a mother and homemaker, she spends a large portion of her time in assisting her husband and the entire evangelistic team. Her husband says, "I view my wife's contribution as a vital one, and it is essential for the smooth-flowing and aggressive outreach of our program." Insights revealed in this article will give guidance and encouragement to other ministers' wives in the performance of husband and wife team ministry.—Marie Spangler*

ppines, and I had been wishing I could visit some of these people in their homes. Now the way was open.

That afternoon we visited a lady who had been coming regularly to the meetings and who had almost accepted the message. We appealed to her to give her heart totally to the Lord and be baptized, but through the translator she expressed her fears. She was afraid of the many sacrifices she would have to make, afraid that her family would disown her and she would no longer be a part of the family. We prayed with her and left.

The next Sabbath she was in church. At the conclusion of the sermon my husband, Mark, made a strong appeal. As the congregation sang "Just As I Am," many responded, but she hesitated. I was standing in the back of the church, and I noticed that this lady was going through a real struggle. So I went over and put my arm

around her and said, "I know the Lord will help you to make the right decision." She looked at me and smiled.

After the song was finished, I noticed that she had gone around to the back and up by the baptismal tank. I followed her to see what she was doing. She looked over the situation and then came back out and said to me, "Are you going back to the States soon?" I responded, "Yes, tomorrow." She said, "I have made my decision. I'm going to be baptized today."

It was thrilling for me to realize that just the little caring act of putting my arm around her and letting her know that I understood was one of the things that helped her to make a decision that day.

For the past fifteen years I have worked with my husband on a ministerial team. My greatest joy in ministry comes from working with people. Many people around us want to know about Christ, but because I have small children, I can't always leave them to give Bible studies. But I still have the opportunity of working closely with these people at the public meetings or in my home. I love to meet the needs of other people.

One of the ways I help here at the Lake Union Soul Winning Institute is by holding nutrition classes. When we first began this ministry, I didn't feel this was my field. My training and background were in elementary education; the community nutrition classes were a whole new field of endeavor. But I began by sharing with others what I know about nutrition and some of the things that have been successful in our own home. There is a great interest in nutrition today, and these nutrition classes are a wonderful bridge between the health programs and the evangelistic meetings.

Anyone who has held nutrition classes knows they require a lot of work and take a lot of preparation. From purchasing the food to preparing the samples and setting up trays, the preparation is phenomenal. I can remember thinking, "I wonder if this is important. Is it worth all the time and effort that must be put into it?"

When we were working at planting a new church in Burbank, Illinois, over 100 attended our nutrition series. A young woman named Valerie Talbot came night

after night. During the last nutrition session we invited those attending to come to the evangelistic meetings. Valerie and her husband, Doug, attended the Prophecy Lecture meetings each evening. After attending church every Sabbath for about a year, Doug and Valerie were baptized. Was all my work worth it? Of course!

I love being actively involved in evangelism, and specifically, the work of the Institute. How can I do this with three children? I've always said there are two things I don't want to sacrifice—my children, and my husband and his work. I believe they can be combined, but certain conditions must be met. For example, it must be convenient for me to be close to our work in order to work with my husband, but at the same time my children must be involved. We bring our children to the cooking schools, and at times they help. During the evangelistic meetings I organize children's meetings—both for the children of people who attend and for my own children. (Our entire program is planned like a Vacation Bible School.) Many times our children have helped collate and staple materials, worked with us in door-to-door survey work and Ingathering, and cooperated with us in producing tapes. It's exciting to view children as part of the ministerial team. I think this is one of the things that have kept our family unified.

Of course there are also times when we do things with them to meet their needs—take them some place they want to go, have a family picnic, or engage in an activity they enjoy. We want to make sure our children are involved with us in whatever we do.

I believe God has given me the gift of hospitality, and throughout our ministry our home has always been open. In fact, for eleven of the thirteen years we have been married we have had people living with us, training for evangelism. I think of Brad Thorp, who lived in our home for three years and now is in British Columbia with a team of about twenty people actively working in evangelism. Tony Moore and Helen Cooper, who are now husband and wife, got to know each other on our team.

They are now actively working in evangelism and have a team in their home. Mike and Penny Sczekan lived in our home, and they are now pastoring and carrying out an aggressive evangelistic ministry in Chicago. There are many challenges in having people living in one's home, but these young people working in evangelism far outweigh the trials.

Of course every minister's wife should not try to do exactly what I have done—opening up my home, at times having eight or ten people living with us, participating in cooking schools, taking care of campaign business and finances, doing organizational work for my husband.

The Lord has given different people a variety of talents and gifts, and each needs to know specifically what her gifts are. Some people may be gifted in music. They can sing beautifully or play the organ or piano and be a real asset to their husband's ministry in that area. (That doesn't happen to be my specific gift.) Others have gifts in other areas.

Everyone can practice hospitality in some way. You may not have people living with you for long periods of time, but you can open your home to the needs of others. A bowl of hot soup and a chance to talk in a warm kitchen may be just what will meet the needs of a lonely person.

The One Thousand Days of Reaping evangelistic thrust has just begun. Nothing is more fulfilling than being a part of soul winning. Your part may not be to give Bible studies. It may be in evangelistic music, record keeping, planning children's meetings, organizing weekly mailings, typing, or a host of other ways. I believe that as ministers' wives we need to be eyes for our husbands. As people come to the meetings, we can recognize some of their needs and try to fill those needs.

Recently we had four Mormon missionaries coming to our evangelistic meetings. One night I went up to them and said, "So glad you're here tonight, I've noticed you coming night after night and would like to get a little better acquainted with you." As we talked I learned that these boys were living by themselves and cooking their meals every day. I asked them if they would

like to come over for dinner. We had a wonderful time with them, and they came back to eat dinner with us on several occasions. It just happened to work out that we had a Bible study with them after the meal. This joy in ministry is hard to replace with anything else.

During public crusades I have two specific areas of responsibility. One is the children's meetings, which I have described. The other is organizing the names, which I feel is very important. You can have a good evangelistic meeting with tremendous preaching, but you also need to know who is coming to the meetings, because the dynamics of decision-making take place in the home. So I put the names on a master list and organize them for our team so they can visit these people. This is something I can do at home with the children.

It makes my husband feel a little more secure, knowing that I am the one who is organizing and overseeing the evangelistic names. He knows there will be no lack of concern, no complacency about getting the names out on time and having the list done accurately.

How can you, a minister's wife, become actively involved in the One Thousand Days of Reaping? First, you can encourage your husband to be actively involved in soul winning. Rather than wishing aloud that he were home more, work closely with him; involve your family as an evangelistic team.

Second, you have unique talents and gifts. Whatever those talents are, whether they be in the line of music, hospitality, health, or organization, contribute your unique talents to a more effective soul-winning program.

Third, pray that God will help you to find some person with whom you can share the message in some way—whether it's by sharing it by your life or by opening your home to that person and letting him see you really care. The One Thousand Days of Reaping is not simply a General Conference program or your husband's program. It is Christ's appeal to your heart. Accept the challenge, and enjoy an adventure in ministry!

## Prayers from the parsonage

Pain woke me at night and forced me to bed in the day. The spasms ebbed, only to return with more intensity. "Dear God," I prayed. "Show me what is wrong." The blast continued.

My kind doctor, his face sober, admitted, "I can feel a growth but don't know what it is. I'm scheduling you immediately for ultrasound." The ground seemed to

tremble beneath my feet. "Why me, oh God?" I asked. But there was no answer.

Slowly I awoke from the emergency operation. The scalpel's fire had left me hurting, weak, scarred. "God, where are You?" I cried.

No voice rang from the heavens. No light streamed into the room. No presence came to my side. Yet You were near.

"And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the

Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a sound of gentle stillness" (1 Kings 19:11, 12, margin).

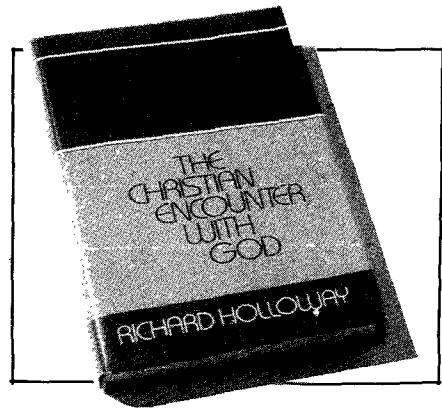
Waiting for relief, I had not lost control. Walking near death, I had not lost courage. Wondering about You, I had not lost faith.

All the while You were there, quieting my heart. Thank you!

Cherry B. Habenicht

# Recommended reading

From divorce to evangelism and church growth, from missions to theology and Biblical studies, this month's book reviews include a potpourri that is certain to have something of interest to everyone!



## **Beyond Belief: The Christian Encounter With God**

Richard Holloway, Eerdmans, 1981, 168 pages, \$8.95. Reviewed by Gerald Wheeler, associate book editor, Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Holloway feels that too many theologians have reduced God from a living Person, who is active in history and longs to meet mankind through Christ, to something little more than a concept or abstraction.

Religious man wants nice, sure, absolute statements about God. How we say things about God can become more important than God Himself, as we have repeatedly observed in the heated theological controversies that have torn the Christian church apart. This can lead to mental games and other dangers, including unbelief and even subtle manipulation of God Himself.

At the same time, our religious formulas seek to control or manipulate God. "We don't want him interrupting our theories. We don't want our assumptions disturbed. We want to remain in control of the action. That's why we like words about God. Then we can manipulate and rearrange and play games with. We can't do that with God. That's why we prefer a theory about God to God himself."

To avoid these dangers, we must ever remember that "God is not a topic to be discussed but a reality whom we must encounter." Holloway takes us through Scripture to see those "puzzling reflections in a mirror" that hint to us of the face of God.

Has our preaching and teaching presented a cardboard caricature of what God is like? Then, according to Holloway, we must go to Scripture, which speaks of a God more mysterious and wonderful than

we have realized. The gospel may be simple, but God is not, and every Christian must accept this fact before he can reverently kneel before his Creator and Redeemer or preach Him to others. Every minister or teacher should read this book to be reminded that God is not an intellectual argument, but a living, loving Person who must ever transcend our human understanding.

## **The Psalms: Structure, Content, and Message**

Claus Westermann. Translated (from German) by Ralph D. Gehrke. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1980, 136 pages, \$4.95, paper. Reviewed by Siegfried H. Horn, Professor Emeritus, Andrews University.

The author, a distinguished former professor of Old Testament at Heidelberg, known from several other helpful books on Biblical subjects, in this book carefully charts the different categories and types of psalms and explains their original settings in daily life. It is helpful to find the various types of psalms discussed separately, such as the community or individual psalms of Lament, community or individual psalms of narrative praise, Creation psalms, liturgical psalms, wisdom psalms, and the few others that belong to other categories. By means of key examples the author guides the reader to understand the different patterns of Old Testament prayer and worship so that he can appreciate the psalms' powerful and timeless message.

This reviewer agrees with the author in most of his exegetical views and believes that careful readers of this book can obtain new insights into the Psalter. However, as a conservative Old Testament scholar, this reviewer parts ways with Professor Westermann who, together with many liberal scholars, believes that most psalms originated in the late periods of Hebrew history and does not accept the authorship of many psalms attributed by their introductions to early Biblical personages such as David, Solomon, Asaph, and others.

## **Toward an Exegetical Theology**

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981, 268 pages, \$9.95. Reviewed by E. Edward Zinke, associate director, General Conference Biblical Research Institute.

Many books have been written on

exegetical method, and many others have dealt with homiletics, but few, it is claimed, have considered the relationship of exegesis to proclamation. Kaiser purposes to aid the pastor in his task of moving from what was said and meant by the Biblical author in his setting to what the text means to us today for preaching. This task is not to be accomplished by removing the text from its historical background and significance by placing it in a contemporary existential setting. Even exegesis, which is essential to the task, is not within itself sufficient. Rather, it is necessary to come to terms with the meaning and intention of the Biblical author if we are to hear what God intended to convey through that author. This requires grammatical-contextual-historical-syntactical-theological-cultural exegesis, which is called in short the syntactical-theological method of exegesis. The pastor must give consideration not only to grammatical relationships but also to relations within sentences and paragraphs as they support the central message of the book. Only thus is it possible to hear God's message for us today. The pastor will find this volume a useful guide to the necessary task of exegesis as a basis for preaching.

## **The Christian World Mission: Today and Tomorrow**

J. Herbert Kane, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981, 294 pages, \$13.95. Reviewed by Jan Paulsen, secretary, Northern European Division.

Every Christian who is conscious of his name cannot avoid asking questions about his personal role and about the role and function of his church. What is the church's mission? What is mission? Whose mission?

For centuries the church felt quite secure and sure about what her mission was: she believed she was God's special instrument to proclaim salvation by faith in Jesus Christ and to gather together those who thus believed into a community of discipleship.

Lately this fundamental understanding has been widely challenged. And the loudest voices have come from within the church itself.

Dr. Kane is one of a number of evangelical voices who are answering the challenge and standing up in defense of the church's traditional, Biblical under-

standing of mission. In the "Today" section of his book Dr. Kane deals with the Biblical basis and the global dimensions of missions, giving his fundamental rationale for the continuation of a global mission program.

The second part of his book, "Tomorrow," is perhaps the one which the reader will find most stimulating and helpful. Under the heading "Crucial Issues" he seeks specifically to answer challenges to mission conveyed by mission theological nomenclature of recent years, e.g., "Humanization," "Shalom," "Moratorium," "Contextualization," et cetera. The minister who has not read Kane's previous books will find this one a useful addition to his library.

### The Divorce Myth

J. Carl Laney, *Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1981, 160 pages, \$7.95. Reviewed by Roger H. Ferris, pastor, Seattle, Washington.*

"According to the position set forth in this book, divorce and remarriage constitutes a sin against God and is a manifestation of disobedience to His Word," Laney writes. In a systematic way, this position is both developed and defended from Scripture, beginning with the Genesis record of the institution of marriage and progressing through the teachings of Moses, Ezra, Malachi, Jesus, and Paul.

Unlike many ultraconservatives, Laney carefully develops and defends his position with scholarship rather than invective. Reading the book was a stimulating experience.

### How to Help Your Church Grow

George E. Knowles, *Review and Herald, 1981, 172 pages, \$6.95, paper. Reviewed by John W. McGraw, pastor, Wheaton, Maryland.*

The church has come up with many new witnessing plans through the years. Some have proved successful, while others have flourished for a time and then faded away. *How to Help Your Church Grow* presents the plans that have proved successful. The fourteen chapters include real-life success stories of growing churches.

At the end of each chapter there are questions for discussion, making it useful for training classes. This book would be a good companion for the recently published *Witnessing for Christ*.

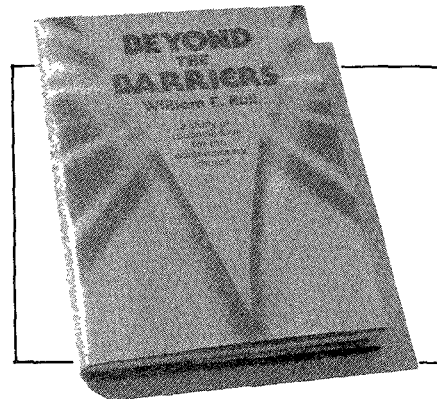
### Dramatic Narrative in Preaching

David M. Brown, *Judson Press, 1981, 96 pages, \$4.95, paper. Reviewed by Willard D. James, pastor, Moab, Utah.*

A sermon, says the author, is a call to action on some point of the Biblical message. From this definition he concludes: (1) a sermon finds its foundation in the Biblical story; (2) a sermon is a call to action. Any preacher who accepts this as a valid definition of a sermon will find the

book a gold mine of useful information.

This is not just another book on the different theories of sermon preparation. Rather it deals with a style distinctively its own. The author has done a masterful job of carrying the reader step by step through the preparation and delivery of the narrative (story type) sermon. It is written in a style that even the lay person can easily follow and enjoy. The book contains a useful annotated bibliography noting many useful sources of background material for sermon preparation. In addition, the author has included several of his sermons as samples of the narrative sermon.

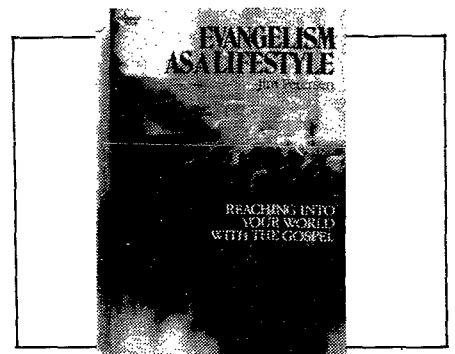


### Beyond the Barriers: A Study of Reconciliation for the Contemporary Church

William E. Hull, *Broadman Press, 1981, 143 pages, \$4.95. Reviewed by William G. Johnson, associate editor, Adventist Review.*

Dr. Hull sets out to show the current significance for Christian personal and social life of Ephesians 2:11-22, particularly verse 14—" [Christ] hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." With opening ("The Wall Breaker") and closing ("The Wall Builder") chapters forming the frame, he develops his thesis in four parallel chapters that form the main thrust of the work—"Beyond the Social Barrier," "Beyond the Sexual Barrier," "Beyond the Sacral Barrier," and "Beyond the Spiritual Barrier."

The author ingeniously constructs these chapters around the plan of the second Temple and the second mount. Thus, the four chapters in turn commence with descriptions of the four areas of access in the ancient Jewish complex, each closer to the manifest presence of God than the previous one: the Temple Mount, the limit of the Gentiles' approach; the women's court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. Dr. Hull then shows in each chapter how Christ and the apostles worked for the removal of these barriers in the Christian church, as Gentile believers and women were given full status, priestly distinctions were obliterated, and God was made personally accessible to all. Finally, he shows what removal of those barriers means in the life of the church today.



### Evangelism as a Life Style

Jim Petersen, *NawPress, 1980, 144 pages, \$3.95, paper. Reviewed by Rudolf E. Klimes, associate director, General Conference Health and Temperance Department.*

The reader may expect a practical guide in soul winning, but this is not a how-to book. Petersen, who serves with the Navigators, proposes "affirmation evangelism," the process of modeling and explaining the Christian message, which is different from the normal proclamation of the gospel, through which non-Christians receive clear statements of the main salvation message. Petersen states that planning, watering, and cultivating are also parts of evangelism. These he calls affirmation evangelism. "His people incarnate his character; they audio-visualize the nature of his eternal reign."

Petersen suggests that the witness is first to adjust to those he evangelizes; the evangelized are not to adjust to the evangelist. The evangelist is to participate first in the lives of others, to be a prototype of Christ's incarnation. In the last six pages, Petersen presents some practical ways for evangelism. The reader will find that this thought-provoking little paperback will help him rethink his approach to evangelism.

### Building Sermons to Meet People's Needs

Harold T. Bryson and James C. Taylor, *Broadman Press, 1980, 139 pages, \$5.95. Reviewed by Patrick Boyle, pastor, Watford, Herts., England.*

A careful reading of this book will refresh preachers at all levels of experience, although much will be familiar to students of homiletics. The authors believe that most preachers try to present too many ideas. The result is often confusion and ineffective preaching. Their emphasis upon the need to take one idea and develop and present it is not only a corrective but a positive contribution to counteract ineffectiveness in preaching.

This book is a rebuke to all who place their own pet theories and burdens upon a suffering congregation. The preacher is not only the servant of God and His Word but also servant to God's people. A note of caution, fully recognized by the authors, is that without due care preachers who follow their counsel might through overstructuring become wooden in their preaching.

*Baptismal objectives for the Thousand Days of Reaping are set in a context of concern for losses through the "back door" of the church. Thoroughness in preparing candidates is essential.*



## One Thousand Days of Reaping

Goals are in from the world divisions! The following are the accession objectives each division has set for itself during the One Thousand Days of Reaping: Africa-Indian Ocean: 150,000; Australasia: 25,000; Eastern Africa: 65,000; Euro-Africa: 42,000; Far East: 125,000; Inter-America: 208,748; North America: 141,000; Northern Europe: 6,700; South America: 170,000; Southern Asia: 100,000; Trans-Africa: 100,000; Middle East Union: 301. Total: 1,133,749.

What would SDA world membership be if losses through the "back door" could be dramatically reduced? Don Yost, General Conference archivist, has proposed the following figures based on an actual 1980 world membership of 3,480,518. If membership losses had been reduced by 25 percent, 1980 world membership would have been 4,200,961. If reduced by 50 percent: 5,047,641; if reduced by 75 percent: 6,075,174; if reduced by 100 percent: 7,283,280! The "back-door problem" is a world membership problem. The One Thousand Days of Reaping

program recognizes this. Not one person should be baptized into the church who is a "stony ground" hearer. It will be no credit to anyone to baptize those who are not ready, only to have them fail of faithfulness in weeks or months! The One Thousand Days of Reaping document recommends that preparation of all candidates for church membership be more *thorough*, so that new members can quickly join hands with us in the joy of finishing God's work.

### Family reunion

Families are being separated by many causes today: misunderstanding, financial stress, sickness, death. And the church family suffers similar separation—many members cannot or no longer desire to attend services. How does the church handle these missing members whose absence destroys the unity of the church family?

The Sunnysvale, California, church recently held "White Flower Sabbath." After a special sermon entitled, "Family Reunion," 200 white flowers with envelopes containing names of missing members were given to participating members to deliver. The result? Missing members were touched by the love and concern shown them, and some promised to come back to church. The appreciation of those who could not attend because of poor health could be measured only by their warm smiles of gratitude.

Your church family has missing members, too. Why not try a "White Flower Sabbath," and have a family reunion!

### It isn't all that hard!

Suppose there were an absurdly simple plan by which more than four billion people could be won to Christ in less than your lifetime! Would you

be interested? Especially if the plan were not only simple but scriptural? And if it could be pulled off without staggering amounts of money, elaborate organization, or professional personnel? Hang on to your well-worn Bibles because, amazing as it may sound, there is such a plan!

To make it even more interesting, assume that you are the only Christian in the world—an assumption you may have made before, anyway. This time, let's say it's true. You make an acquaintance and become his good friend, such a good friend that you teach him about Christ. It takes you all year to do it, but at last he or she is converted.

Now there are two Christians in the world—you and your friend. During the next year both of you teach and convert one person each. If this pattern could be maintained by each person who becomes a Christian (each person winning one convert per year) more than 4 billion people—or every person on earth—could be won to Christ in just 32 years!

Impossible? Perhaps. But the mathematics works out. And it is the method Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19, 20.

### Family togetherness

Christian Home and Family Altar Week, scheduled in 1983 for February 19 to 26, could provide an exciting contact point with your community early in the new year.

"Family Togetherness: A Celebration" will be the suggested theme, and the General Conference Home and Family Service will be sending a potpourri of ideas to North American Division pastors for use in planning for this week. Since the subject of the family is proving to be as effective a drawing card in the community as health has been, materials

are designed to bring church and community families together in a celebration of family values that we share.

Coming early in December will be suggestions for multi-generational family activities and program ideas. Also provided will be camera-ready artwork and copy for newspaper advertising, a program bulletin, an activity placemat for a fellowship dinner, design for a children's bulletin, and patterns for banners to add a festive flair.

Also available at minimal cost will be an audio packet with a 30-second public service radio spot, several announcements to be played during the church announcement period in preceding weeks, and a children's story.

Watch for details early in December.

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